

THE
G I R L
OF THE
MOUNTAINS.

A NOVEL,
IN FOUR VOLUMES,
BY MRS. PARSONS,
AUTHOR OF WOMEN AS THEY ARE, &c.

A noble Spirit acquires new Strength from Adversity.—The Mind
is not to be *subdued* by the Vicissitudes of Life, though its feelings
may be wounded by the unjust Persecution of the World.

VOL. II.



PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,

AT THE

Minerva-Press,

LEADENHALL-STREET.

MDCXC VII.



THE
GIRL
OF THE
MOUNTAINS.

A NOVEL
IN FOUR VOLUMES.
BY MRS. PARSONS.
AUTHOR OF WOMEN AS THEY ARE, &c.

A noble spirit never new grows in our hearts—The Mind
is not so to be taught by the Visitation of Life, though its language
may be learned by the wisdom of the World.

VOL. II.



PRINTED FOR WILLIAM LANE,

AT THE

SPRINGS-FIELD,

LEADENHALL-STREET,

LONDON.



THE
G I R L

OF THE

MOUNTAINS.

"I HAVE interrupted your tête à tête, Don Felix?"

"By no means, my dear Countess; I met the *little girl* crying, and naturally asked the cause."

"And pray, what answer did she return?"

VOL. II.

B

"None,

"None, but was shrinking by me as you came in view."

As it was impossible from the time, that many words could have passed, the Countess appeared not to doubt his assertion.

"There is an unaccountable mystery about that girl;" said she, "you know not, perhaps, that your friend has taken a mighty fancy to her, and absolutely offered to marry her, if her birth would not disgrace him."

"How!" cried Don Felix, "marry her, can *he* think of marrying such a lovely young creature?"

"As to her loveliness," returned she, in a tone of pique, "I see but little of it; but there are people who have odd tastes, and he, I suppose, has fallen in love with her youth and simplicity, for her education has been very confined I believe; and of the world and fashionable manners, she knows nothing."

Don



Don Felix saw the error he had been guilty of.

The Countess was one of those sort of women, who chuse always to thrust themselves into the fore-ground; who by insolence, much volubility and consummate vanity, aim at giving the world an opinion of their vast consequence—who delight in the ostentatious display of benevolence, candor and goodwill; and assuming an air of protection to some amiable young person, unfortunately placed under their roof, are at the same time meanly jealous, envious of their superior attractions, and foolishly supposing the world may be imposed upon by their specious and contradictory conduct, seize with avidity every opportunity of lessening the merit, and detracting from the good qualities of that person,—honor, integrity and humanity calls upon them to protect and defend. Such women there are, and such was the Countess.

She knew little of Adelaide indeed, but that little entitled her to tenderness and attention; she was unfortunate and unprotected—claims upon her compassion; and when she condescended to offer her protection, a young creature, so situated, had a right to a delicate consideration, that might tend to lessen her sense of obligation.

But vanity, that foe to every virtue, was the predominant passion in this lady; nor could she bear that a young insignificant person should draw the attention of any man; she had more than once repented taking Adelaide in her train, and though at first she thought the governor's offer too advantageous for her, yet, as it would effectually separate them, and she could *take to herself the merit* of having handsomely settled her, she entered warmly into his interest, and was excessively provoked this insignificant, friendless girl, should presume to judge for herself, decline such an offer, and have secrets she could not penetrate into.

Under

Under the impression of this disgust, she met Don Felix, and was startled at seeing him speaking to Adelaide, but was satisfied by the manner in which he accounted for it, till he unfortunately dropped the word "lovely!" an unpardonable epithet, in her idea. Don Felix presently comprehended the mistake he had been guilty of, and sought to repair it, by adding, with a smile,

"A gallant Spaniard, Madam, makes youth and loveliness synonymous terms; they are words of course, which convey no particular meaning or distinction. As for your little friend, you will allow it was natural I should be surprised to hear of the governor's intention in her favor."

"Why yes," replied she, in a more softened tone, "the man's whim is unaccountable to be sure; but as I very anxiously wish to provide for the girl, have taken upon me the care of her, (a very unpleasant task, heaven knows) and wish to see her settled,—such an offer, so much above any thing she could
B 3 hope

hope for, or *I expect for her*, you may be sure met with my approbation; and I was eager to accelerate things, lest he should change his mind; but the very point on which the union depended, has overturned the whole affair."

"How so?" asked Don Felix.

"Why, he only wished to know her name and origin, and this she absolutely refuses to declare."

"I thought her name was Dupont," returned he.

"Such is the name she bears," answered the Countess, "but she acknowledges 'tis an assumed one, and she persists in declaring she will not give any account of her family. This, unquestionably, has an unfavorable appearance: her father is dead; he might be unfortunate, and obliged to live in retirement; but there is equal probability that he might be unworthy, and obliged to fly from detection and punishment. At all events, you see my earnest endeavours to settle her, except in an obscure way, will be eternally frustrated;

frustrated; for no one will marry a girl, ashamed to declare her origin."

"Certainly not," answered Don Felix; "I pity the poor thing; she can never hope for any establishment in life, and must depend upon your charitable benevolence for support."

"I shall not desert her," returned she, with an air of consequence; "if she travels with *me*, she must gain information from *my* society, and a knowledge of the world that may enable her some time hence to get her bread decently."

Don Felix paid her several compliments on her *generosity* and *liberality*, which put her in perfect good humour; and she quitted him to give the governor, who was just arrived, an account of her commission.

To him she repeated much the same words as she had spoken to Don Felix, with additional sarcasms on the concealed birth, and ingratitude of Adelaide.

He heard her with equal surprise and concern; and, after pausing a moment, asked if he might be permitted to speak to her himself.

"Undoubtedly," replied she, haughtily; "but it will be strange indeed, if she is more unreserved to you, than to me who have been her benefactress: however, I will send for her, and you may try your influence."

She quitted the room; the governor reflected on what he had heard; he felt himself more warmly interested for this unfortunate young woman, and that interest impelled him to treat her with more than usual respect, when she appeared, confused and trembling, before him.

When he had led her to a chair, "Pardon me, Madam," said he, "if I am guilty of an intrusion; I ventured to solicit the interest of the Countess in my favor. The first moment I saw you, I was charmed by your appearance;

pearance; every day, every hour, that I have had the pleasure of being in your company, has confirmed that prepossession. I am conscious of my deficiencies, of my want of attraction, for so young and amiable a woman, for I am seven years on the wrong side of thirty; but my temper is cheerful; I have good health, and every possible inclination to study the happiness of the woman, who will condescend to accept of my hand. Permit me to use my endeavours to deserve your favour and good opinion."

This address, so contrary to what she had expected, after his conference with the Countess, greatly surprised Adelaide; but endeavouring to collect herself, and not a little pleased with the politeness he observed towards her, after a little pause, she made this reply.

"I feel myself under the warmest obligations to you, sir, for the distinction you honor me with. The Countess has reported

TO THE GIRL OF

to me your sentiments in my favor; it becomes me to be perfectly candid on this occasion. I am superior to false pride, and therefore frankly tell you, I am without friends or fortune; without a single advantage, but an education that has taught me to know myself. Even my name is assumed; the misfortunes of my family are sacred, but they are insuperable obstacles to my forming a connection with any gentleman. I am an unfortunate orphan; the situation I am now placed in, I am sensible is ill calculated for a young woman like me; it may give me a taste for the world, where I have no pretensions to become a member. I blame myself for accepting the kind protection of the Countess; I ought to have preferred a Convent, that yet must be my resource. I thank you, sir, for your favorable opinion of me. I will not say that I am undeserving of it, for my principles are just and virtuous; but the circumstances attached to me, must for ever preclude me from receiving any benefit by that distinction."

Here

Here she stopt, surprised at the promptitude with which she had spoken.

Don Lopez, the governor, listened very attentively, and with marks of great admiration; he was a man of nice honor, and strong feelings; he had all the gallantry natural to a Spaniard, without any of that pride which formerly disagreeably characterised that nation; in him it was a greatness of soul, that gave birth to the most noble sentiments; a susceptible heart, and an admirer of youth and beauty. He had been engaged in many little amours, but had never seen a woman to his taste for a lasting connection, till he beheld Adelaide. Her unassuming good sense, delicacy and modesty, united with a lovely person, had entirely captivated his heart; nor did her present conduct at all tend to lessen his esteem.

“ I have heard you, Madam,” said he,
“ with concern, because the subject must be
painful to you; but I am convinced a young
B 6 woman,

woman, capable of so much frankness and honor, deserves a much higher rank than I have the power to offer you; and the very circumstances that may be supposed to make against you, in my opinion, increase your consequence, and throw me at a greater distance from the honor I solicit. But I beseech you to take time to reflect; I entreat you to accept of a name, of a rank and fortune, with the tenderest endeavours of an obliged man, to make you forget the misfortunes that only render you more respectable in my eyes. I pledge my honor, which is sacred, never to pry into any one circumstance that has befallen yourself or family; I am convinced my offer can do you no honor, but I will exert myself to repair the injustice of fortune, and to deserve your esteem."

With a low bow he quitted the room, and left Adelaide more astonished and perplexed than ever she had been in her life.

He returned to the Countess.

"Well,

“ Well, Governor, what says your Dulcinea to you ?”

“ Your charming young friend, Madam,” answered he, with an air of dignity, “ has impressed me with the highest respect for her; after your information, I presumed not to ask her any questions that would wound her delicacy; I am convinced her birth is not disgraceful; but be it what it may, she will ennoble any name; she will dignify any station; and if she can be prevailed upon to honor me with her hand, I shall feel myself the most obliged and happiest of men.”

“ My God!” cried she, “ is it possible a Spanish nobleman would really marry a little adventurer, who dares not avow her name. Be assured you are mistaken in thinking her family respectable; no young woman would make a secret of any circumstance that could do her credit; I know the world too well to believe it: if her father ever was a man of any consequence, he had certainly been disgraced and proscribed, or he never would have resided in such a desolate place.”

“ Admitting

“Admitting what you say to be true,” replied he, “a liberal mind must be above the absurd prejudice, of thinking that disgrace must be attached to her; I, at least, have no such narrow ideas; I care not who, or what her father was; she has honour and integrity, and her acceptance of me I shall consider as the highest distinction; therefore, dear Madam, give me your interest, and influence, if possible, your lovely friend in my favour.”

The governor had scarcely taken his leave, before her woman came in; this woman, accustomed to be a party in all her lady's secrets, had ever looked upon Adelaide with a jealous eye, lest she should supercede her in a place that had given her some consequence; she knew well the disposition of the Countess, and came now to communicate a secret, that she was certain must turn to the prejudice of her supposed rival.

“I think

“ I think it my duty to acquaint your Ladyship with some intelligence that will surprise you. Sancho, the servant of Don Felix, was last night at the governor's, where he got a little intoxicated, and then came here to wait for his master. He was mighty free in talking, and our Antoine observed, “ that his master the Don must be very much in love to follow his lady here, and that very likely a marriage might put a stop to our travels.”

“ Marriage,” cried Sancho, “ no, no, my master won't think of that, I believe; he loves a pretty girl to be sure, and is much smitten with the young lady. Sancho,” says he, “ I must have that lovely creature, I see she is a dependant upon the Countess, but we must go cautiously to work, otherwise the pride and vanity of the lady will blow up all my schemes; so the next day we set off, and I'll warrant you he'll carry his point.” This, Madam, Antoine repeated to me just now, and so there is no doubt but there is an intrigue between Don Felix and this young girl,

girl, your ladyship took in charity, and who will turn out base and ungrateful."

Surprise is too poor a word to express the feelings of the Countess, on this development of Don Felix's motives for the gallantry which she had given herself full credit for. Rage, indignation and revenge, took possession of her soul: that an insignificant girl should have made too such conquests, and her superior claims to admiration, prove but secondary objects for the attentions on which she had valued herself, were such mortifying reflections, that she instantly resolved the innocent and unfortunate cause of her disappointment, should severely repent her presumption. Certain looks which Don Felix could not always command, had, before this, given her some alarm; but the slighting manner in which he had lately mentioned her, had done away her first suspicions. The governor's application to her had been made while she was under the first impressions, and she was then desirous of getting rid of her, though

though she regretted the offer was so advantageous; the subsequent conversation with Don Felix, had given a different turn to her thoughts, and she now wished to retain and mortify her for her presumption, in refusing to disclose her story, and insolence in declining to marry the governor. But what was now to be done? If she withdrew her protection, Don Felix would take her into his: she could not force her to marry Don Lopez, nor did she wish her to be so well settled; yet now that he appeared so absurd, as to wave all further inquiries, and offer to marry an unknown and indigent girl, she had little doubt but that she would gladly accept him.

In proportion as she grew to fear this little girl, she began to hate her; she was young, handsome, and respectable in her sentiments and manners; unpardonable crimes in the eyes of a woman, who had the wish, if not the power of making unbounded conquests; whose vanity and self-delusion still flattered her that she had charms, and who sought, by
arrogance

arrogance and deception, to cover the crimes and follies which had marked her youthful days; and from her present rank in life, to claim that attention her conduct and manners no ways entitled her to. What a dangerous inmate had she taken charge of!—how bitterly did she repent being drawn in, to make a companion of one who dared to think, and act for herself, when she had expected to find a humble, mortified, obliged girl, that would submit to her self-consequence, and be obedient to her commands.

Mitand, her woman, failed not to profit by the displeasure she had raised against Adelaide, and accepted, with joy, the honorable employment of being a spy upon Don Felix, and the object of her hatred.

When Adelaide returned to her apartment, after the conversation with the governor, she began to reflect seriously on the noble and disinterested offer, so unexpectedly and unequivocally made to her; she stood alone in the

the world, without a friend or protector: the Countess had already treated her with haughtiness and contempt; little did she feel inclined to love or respect her; and to travel in the suite of one, who had in such early days assumed the mistress, rather than the gentle friend, was what her spirit revolted against. She was now offered rank and independence with a worthy character she esteemed, but she felt not any preference for him. A recollection and a sigh she could not suppress, brought poor Lewis before her, as she had left him in the cavern, without the least possible chance that she should ever see him again; she placed the sigh to the account of compassion; endeavoured to banish the idea, and return to present considerations.

When she had weighed and argued every prospect that was before her, she concluded that it would be more honorable to accept of Isabella's generous offer, and retire to a Convent, than either marry a worthy man, without a decided preference in his favour,
or

or continue to receive obligations from a woman, who seemed inclined to make her feel the full weight of them, and perhaps exact compliances she could not, consistent with her own feelings, accord with.

Under this impression, she wrote, without further hesitation, to Isabella, and opened her situation and intentions without reserve; "entreated her advice and assistance to escape from the tyranny of the Countess, and the temptation of an offer she ought not to accept, when her heart did not approve of it."

As this letter was written unknown to the Countess, she was obliged to study how it might be carried to the post, when very opportunely Antoine summoned her to dinner; she gave him the letter, and requested he would convey it for her. He readily assured her he would take it immediately after the dinner was over; and in the hope that she should soon be freed from her present disagreeable

agreeable situation, she entered the room with a more cheerful air than common.

The governor and Don Felix were at table; every eye was turned upon her; she felt abashed, but took her seat. Soon after she met the eyes of the lady; the look of indignation and scorn struck poor Adelaide to the heart, and soon clouded the expression of her countenance.

Don Lopez treated her with more than common respect, which was redoubled on observing the negligence of the Countess. Don Felix kept an excellent guard on his words and actions, but now and then gave her such looks, as explained the nature of his sentiments.

That evening there was to be a ball at the castle, which the governor gave in honour of the strangers. Etiquette required he should attach himself to the Countess, nor
could

could she possibly refuse it, though very repugnant to her wishes.

"You will have a lazy companion," said she, "I cannot dance much."

"Oh," replied he, "you can rest sometimes; besides, we will change attendance, and Don Felix, when you are weary of me, will perhaps give you fresh spirits."

This intimation pleased her; Don Felix turned with an air of indifference towards Adelaide.

"Will you permit me the honor of being your escort?"

"I am obliged to you, sir," answered she, "but I do not dance; I am perfectly a stranger to the Spanish dances, nor have I spirits for the diversion at present."

"Perhaps, child," said the Countess, sneeringly, "you have never been taught to dance."

"Yes,

"Yes, madam, I have," answered she, "but it was many years ago, and the solitude in which I lived, afforded no opportunities for practice; yet if it will be absolutely necessary I should dance, though not a matter of choice, I dare say, after a little observation, I may be able to follow the lead."

She said this with an air of pique, being hurt by the sneer thrown out by the other.

"Oh, by no means," cried the Countess, "you are perfectly at liberty to follow your own inclinations."

"Undoubtedly," said the governor, "but I shall feel much disappointment if you find no amusement."

"Of that I do not doubt," answered Adelaide, "I always feel pleasure in seeing others happy."

The subject dropped, but it did not escape the observation of either gentlemen; both were struck by the words and air of dignity

which she assumed for the moment, and both were convinced this "little friendless adventurer," had a mind superior to the situation in which fortune had placed her. The noble minded governor was anxious to transplant this neglected flower into a richer soil, where she might bloom under his fostering care, and confer honour on her possessor.

Don Felix was equally desirous of being the master of such a jewel; but he had spent the early part of his life with an uncle in France: he had imbibed all the licentious gallantry of that gay nation, which was mixed with the pride and self-consequence, but with only a small share of that strict probity and honour, so generally met with in the Spanish nobility.

How to get possession of Adelaide, occupied the chief part of his reveries: he had no idea that she could possibly resist him, when he was at liberty to pay his devoirs to her: but he understood enough of the disposition
of

of her protectress, to be convinced, any public attentions to her would mar all his schemes. He was alarmed at the governor's intentions, and resolved to persuade the Countess to pursue her journey, and leave Estella with all speed.

In the evening, the governor had a very brilliant assembly; and after some refreshments, the dancing was opened with a fandango, the favourite dance among the Spaniards. At first Adelaide was amused, but in a short time disgusted, and could not help feeling the greatest surprise, that a nation so decorous and correct in most points, should tolerate a style of dancing, in her eyes extremely indelicate.

The Countess had her vanity abundantly gratified, by the marked attention of the company; nor was her young protégée neglected: on the contrary, all the gentlemen did homage to her charms, and the governor's partiality could not pass unobserved.

Donna Padilla de Lamas, a lady of some rank in Estella, had long flattered herself with being the object of the governor's adorations: this evening convinced her of her self-delusion, and she was inconceivably mortified at the discovery, having lived to the age of forty without being married. Her hatred to the innocent cause of her disappointment rose in proportion to the attentions of Don Lopez, and she resolved to cultivate an acquaintance with the Countess, that she might have an opportunity to throw obstacles in the way of this amour. With this view, she paid that lady a thousand civilities, and mentioned her intention of paying her respects to her the following day.

The Countess had lived many years in the great world, and was no common observer of men and manners: she presently comprehended the motives for this politeness: she had marked the direction of her eyes, and the expression of them towards Adelaide: she saw envy and jealousy in every glance, and felt

felt no small pleasure in the idea of an associate, who would join to humble and mortify this proud insignificant girl, who more than divided with her the general admiration. The advances of Donna Padilla were handsomely received, and a few minutes served to set aside the national gravity of the one, and give more than usual freedom and animation to the other.

Before the evening closed, they were quite intimate. The Spanish lady addressed herself now and then to Adelaide: she was polite, but reserved: she was not in spirits; Don Felix had seized a moment to use some very tender, though equivocal expressions to her; the governor openly displayed his admiration: she was the object of general attention, yet seemed a poor solitary being, who filled a place in that company, without a name or rank to give her consequence. The natural inquiries that would be made, shocked her: she was one whom nobody knew, and a

dependant on the capricious bounty of a gay lady.

These ideas occupied her mind entirely, and threw an air of solemnity over her countenance.

"You are not happy," said the governor, who had been attentively observing her; "your mind partakes not of the gaiety that reigns here: ah! why will you not confide your happiness to the care of a man, whose bosom would be a sacred repository of your griefs, and the study of whose life would be to remove every cause of sorrow, and restore you to happiness."

Adelaide was deeply affected by those words, and the affectionate tone in which they were uttered: she with difficulty repressed her tears.

"I owe you much, sir," said she, "for this kindness; this is not a proper place to speak;

“speak; I shall have the honour of seeing you to-morrow.”

The governor bowed with an air of transport; willing to flatter himself he conceived hope from her words, and retired to make his more general devoirs, with a countenance that denoted his satisfaction. No part of this scene escaped the malicious observers, though they could not hear the words: nor were the jealous eyes of Don Felix unemployed: he watched for an opportunity to speak unobserved by the Countess.

“Ah! beautiful Adelaide, how I envy Don Lopez; his looks are too expressive not to explain that he has the happiness of being well received: What then must become of me, and others that adore you?”

“I do not understand you, sir,” said she, coldly; both your conjectures and conclusions are perfectly erroneous.”

She left him, and returned to the Countess.

“ Really, child, one would suppose you were in the house of mourning, rather than partaking in a scene of festivity: your features wear gloom enough to damp the pleasure of the party.”

“ I should be extremely sorry to do so,” answered Adelaide, “ but I am of too little consequence to influence the spirits of any one in this company.” She was hurt at the manner of the observation, and the sneer she saw joined in by Donna Padilla.

When they returned home from their entertainment, Adelaide hastened to her apartment; there, retired to her pillow, she revolved on her perplexing situation. On the friendship of the Countess she could have no dependance: the conduct of Don Felix highly displeased her: his duplicity gave her a bad opinion of his heart: he certainly studied to make the Countess satisfied with his attentions to her; and in her
presence

presence was extremely guarded in his words and looks to herself; at the same time that he seized every opportunity, when the Countess chanced to be absent, to impress her with a belief, that he entertained a violent passion for her.

This passion boded her no good, because he chose not to avow it publicly: and she had sufficient understanding to know, that a concealed preference, in his case, could not be an honourable one.

The governor offered her an honourable asylum from every care: she esteemed, she respected him; but, would it be just to repay such generous affection with cold regards only? Then another idea rose to her mind; this Countess, who treats me with so little consideration; who even, before strangers, assumes the look and language of superiority; how will she be mortified, if the governor lifts me to a rank equal to her own, without obliging me to a discovery she thinks so

essential in his eyes, and which, I have no doubt, she supposes would cover me with shame and confusion?—Does she not deserve that I should triumph over her? The thought was momentary; it was the weakness of human nature; the purity of her mind instantly rejected it as unworthy of her; and a plan more consistent with rectitude occupied the remainder of the night; till a gentle sleep stole over her senses, and for a time suspended all her perplexities.

The following morning brought Donna Padilla to the Countess's toilet; her penetration had discerned the ruling passion which animated that lady, and the avenues to her esteem and confidence: expressions of admiration for the enchanting Countess were lavishly bestowed, and were paid back with interest by the delighted lady: reciprocity of sentiment produced equal regards, and the prettiest compliments in the world were bandied about from one to the other. Pity such a pleasing theme should ever be exhausted;

hausted; but so it was: from praising each other, they fell into conversation relative to an insignificant being, whom they vilified without mercy.

“ My dear Countess, who is this young person in your suite, that you treat *with so much kindness* ?”

“ You ask a question, my dear lady, that, strange to say, I cannot answer: it must appear very extraordinary to you, that I know not who, or what she is.”

Then, without any hesitation, she related all she knew of Adelaide's situation; concluding with, “ Compassion and the Hermit's entreaties, induced me to take her under my protection, supposing that she would be grateful and useful: foolishly I have introduced her into company, and have lifted her into consequence that has turned her brain, I believe, for she grows insolent and assuming.”

“ The ridiculous attentions of the governor and Don Felix have intoxicated her
C 5 vanity;

vanity; and I should not wonder if the little adventurer expects to be a woman of rank."

This observation drew on a circumstantial account of the conferences between Don Lopez, herself and Adelaide.

"How?" cried Donna Padilla, when the Countess concluded, "Could he possibly degrade himself by an offer of marriage to an obscure, unknown girl, without a single requisite to claim any man's notice, but her youth! and she, she to refuse him; refuse such a man! depend upon it, hers is a very black story, which she dares not run the hazard of having discovered, as it might be, if she was elevated into distinction."

"I think exactly as you do," answered the Countess, "and heartily wish I could get rid of her, without throwing her in the way of those gentlemen, whose folly has made her impertinent and ungrateful."

"Indeed," returned Padilla, "to place her out of temptation, and provide for her support

support in a proper retirement, is the surest way to fulfil the charge you have rashly taken upon yourself.—A Convent ought to be her asylum.”

“ But I cannot oblige her to enter one ;” said the Countess, “ and if I dismiss her from me, the quixotism of the governor will take advantage of that circumstance, to persuade her into a union with him.”

“ Persuade her !” exclaimed Padilla ; her black eyes darting fire ; “ such a creature to be entreated to form an alliance with him :—I have no patience at the idea :—my dear Countess, give your concurrence to my plans, and I’ll soon rid you of this little impertinent, who fascinates with her youth and affectation, to the prejudice of superior charms, and will sting the heart of her benefactress.”

The Countess was going to reply, in words of grateful exultation, for the kindness of her new friend, when Adelaide entered the room, with an air of soft dignity ; an expression so interesting in her countenance,

that both ladies shrunk at her presence for a moment, abashed at their base designs; till envy and jealousy again recalled their spirits, and increased their indignation.

“You are late in your attendance, I think,” said the Countess, haughtily; while Donna Padilla returned a stiff, supercilious bow, to the compliment Adelaide paid to her.

Hurt by the reflection, she apologized for her remissness, by saying, “that she had no rest the first part of the night, and had dropt asleep at a very late hour, forgetful of the time.”

“Such late hours, and entertainments, are not, I believe, suited to you,” returned the Countess, coldly; “therefore I shall not ask you to attend me to such in future. You have been accustomed to rise with the day, I suppose, and go to bed at its close. You may do so still if you like; I shall not detain you to our little supper parties in future.”

“Oh!

“ Oh !” by no means,” cried Donna Padilla, smiling maliciously ; your *little protégée* is unacquainted with the great world : when persons are lifted out of the sphere they have been accustomed to, their health and understanding is too generally the sacrifice.”

Petrified by the behaviour and words of the two ladies, for a few minutes Adelaide could not articulate a sentence : her bosom swelled with indignation, and native pride struggled to speak the feelings of her soul. Prudence, however, stepped in, to meliorate the severity that trembled on her lips.

“ I know not, madam,” said she, addressing the Countess, “ how I have deserved to incur your displeasure : my heart acquits me of any intention to do so ; and the trivial fault of sleeping an hour too long, when I have apologized for it, is of too futile a nature to draw upon me that scorn, so expressive in your words and manner. This lady, however, can claim no right to insult me : as a stranger,

stranger, I paid my respects to her; perhaps she may be as little entitled to them, as I am far from being a proper object of her wit and ridicule. Whatever my sphere of life has been, my heart has undergone no changes: 'tis an honest and a grateful one; disposed to pay you, madam, every attention your kindness has a right to expect."

She turned, and hastily quitted the room; resentment could no longer suppress her tears, at a reception so mortifying.

The ladies looked at each other with surprise and secret confusion.

"Upon my word," cried Padilla, "this must be some princess in disguise: the age of romance is returning again; we shall have wandering princesses; valiant knights; enchanted castles, and all the wonderful achievements of Amadis de Gaul, revived in the persons of Don Felix and the Governor; they are the modern heroes, destined to deliver

deliver this peerless lady from your chains, and restore her to her honours."

"Raillery apart," said the Countess, "Did you ever see such an air of consequence, as the girl assumed? I blush for her treatment of you."

"Oh pray, madam," returned Padilla, "give yourself no concern; the young lady has only confirmed my prejudices, and given absolute decision to my intended plan."

"Yes, my dear madam, this proud little creature shall soon be removed to your satisfaction."

Adelaide flew back to her apartment, and gave vent to the sorrow and indignation that oppressed her. "Oh, my sweet, amiable Isabella!" cried she, "hasten, hasten to my relief: let me find an asylum in some obscure corner of the earth: let me watch the midnight bell, and tread upon the mansions of the dead, rather than be insulted with favours, and branded with ingratitude. Painful in the extreme, were the retrospections that
obtruded

obtruded upon her mind; and but for the cheering hope, that Donna Isabella would soon realize the kind promises she had made to her at parting, her reason might have sunk under the conflicts of her feelings.

Donna Padilla honoured her new friend with her company at dinner: the two gentlemen also attended; and when Adelaide obeyed the summons, and entered the room, to take her place at the table, every eye was turned upon her: the anxiety of her mind was portrayed in her expressive countenance: she endeavoured to assume a tranquil air, but was too artless to succeed.

The governor tenderly inquired if she was not well:—Don Felix looked the same question.

“Not perfectly so,” she replied, “but her disorder was of a trifling nature.”

She

She tried to eat: to look with composure on the two ladies, who pursued their ungenerous plan; and by a number of studied, mortifying observations, which she clearly understood, gave her the most heart-felt pain. The moment she could, with propriety, withdraw, she left the room. She had been seated about an hour, lost in painful reflections, when some one knocked at the door; opening it, she beheld the governor; and before she could refuse him entrance, he came in, and shut the door.

“Be not alarmed, charming Adelaide,” said he, “but hear me as a friend: I see you are unhappy; tell me ingenuously if my application for your favour has caused you any additional sorrow? I am so deeply interested for your happiness, that I can very readily sacrifice my own, to ensure yours. If any happy man has preceded me in your heart, see me ready to assist your wishes, which ever way they point.—If ’tis your situation with the Countess that hurts your feelings,

feelings, for I have attentively watched her treatment of you, behold me devoted to your service, perfectly disinterested in my views to make you happy. If you will condescend to accept my hand, I will immediately snatch you from a situation so unworthy of you:—if, unhappily, your heart speaks not in my favour, I have a sister, who lives a few miles from hence, who will receive and cherish you as a blessing. She, some years since, lost her only child:—I wished her to reside with me, but the company I am obliged to see was an insuperable objection: she lives in the society of a very few friends, and a companion like you will constitute a felicity, such as she scarcely can hope to enjoy. Speak, madam, if you can make me happy; the study of my life shall be dedicated to render you so. If fortune stands between you and happiness with another man, as a father I will remove that difficulty. If you will honour my sister with your company, I promise never to intrude upon you without permission;—give me the pleasure of restoring
to

to your tranquillity and affluence, and it shall be done in any manner most agreeable to yourself."

Here the generous Don Lopez stopped, waiting for an answer. Overcome with every feeling of surprise and gratitude, when she attempted to speak, the words died on her tongue; she burst into tears, which relieved the oppression on her bosom; and, after a few minutes of affecting silence, she endeavoured to make the following reply.

"To express the grateful feelings of my heart, is impossible; language cannot describe them:—yours is indeed, sir, a heart of uncommon worth, and it grieves me unspeakably that I have only thanks to offer, for goodness so exalted.—You have asked, and you claim my confidence: every particular that is known to the Countess, you shall be acquainted with: the name of my family, and the misfortunes which clouded my early days, must remain in my bosom: yet believe me, misfortunes,

fortunes, and the crimes of others, not any attached to my own family, have caused all my distresses."

She then entered upon her story, from the day that her father had lost himself in his evening's ramble, to their arrival at Estella;—told him of Isabella's kindness, and the letter she had written to her; and concluded with saying, "that she resolved to abide the result of that application; and, if an asylum could be procured for her in a Convent, in that retirement she would spend the remainder of her days.—But if, from circumstances she could not foresee, she was disappointed in that hope, and his sister would condescend to receive her, she would give a proof of her esteem and gratitude, of her reliance on his honour, by soliciting the protection of a lady, whose character he had taught her to esteem."

Don Lopez heard her to the end, without the least interruption, though much agitated
at

at many parts of her story. Astonishment and admiration of her good sense, courage, and dignified sentiments, so uncommon at her age, and so early in life deprived of the advantages of education, and a tender mother, kept him silent some minutes after she had done speaking, gazing attentively upon her.

When recovered from the emotions that overpowered him ; “ I am flattered by your confidence, charming Adelaide, and admire your conduct and sentiments so greatly, that I think myself entirely undeserving of you : neither can I approve that merit like yours should be buried in the gloom of a Convent. Let me entreat you, then, to make my sister happy in such a friend and companion; restore to her the child she has lost, and find your own peace in contributing to hers: she will know how to appreciate your society, and you will confer eternal obligations on her and me. Consent, amiable Adelaide, to make me inestimable in my own eyes, by placing
you

you in a situation, where you will obtain respect and affection."

At that moment tears of gratitude fell from her eyes: he had taken her hand, and respectfully kissed it:—the door of the room was opened, and the Countess, with Donna Padilla, stood before them.

Adelaide started up, in great confusion: scorn, and a malicious triumph, marked the features of the former:—in Donna Padilla's eyes, rage, envy and spite, from every glance; the governor was a little surprised, but he was the most collected of the party, and was going to speak, when the Countess burst out into invectives.

"So, miss, this is your affected indisposition; to afford an excuse for retiring, and indulging in a shameful tête à tête! upon my word, a pretty amour has been carried on, and concluded, under my roof; and I have been

been made the dupe of a pretended honourable offer—ungrateful! unworthy girl!”

“Hold, madam;” said the governor, with spirit, “do not make use of epithets, or behave to this young lady, in a manner you will blush for, when you know how much you injure her.”

“Young lady!” exclaimed the Countess, “say, rather, a little infamous adventurer, whom I have taken out of charity, and who has disgraced me by her scandalous conduct: I have long seen through her arts, and am now convinced of her infamy.”

“Infamy!” repeated Adelaide, and with a heavy sigh she fell back in her chair; and would have fallen senseless to the ground, had not Don Lopez supported her. The suspension of sense was very transient; she soon opened her eyes, though she could not speak.

“For shame, madam!” said the generous governor; “how can you stand thus unmoved, when you have so sensibly wounded this respectable young creature?”

“Respectable!”

"Respectable!" re-echoed Donna Padilla; "I am sorry to see that you are a dupe to her duplicity; however, if this respectable young lady is really ill, we had better leave her to the Countess's woman."

"Not till I see her perfectly restored, shall I leave her," said he.

"Yes," said Adelaide, faintly, "yes, sir, leave me I beseech you; go with the ladies; do me justice."

"I will obey you," answered he, "Oh that you would deign to accept my hand, and give me a right to protect you.—Yet, whatever may be your determination, I have a heart and a hand devoted to your service."

With a low bow, he followed the ladies, who turned indignantly from the room, displeased at such marks of respect to the object of their envy.

When Adelaide was left to the care of Mittand, whom the Countess permitted to be called, she gave a loose to the feelings she

she had endeavoured to suppress: she saw that the ladies would make the most of the interview they had witnessed: that both were enraged, and little likely to be convinced of her innocence, by any thing the governor should urge in her defence. Her reputation lay at the mercy of her enemies; and the choice of remaining with the Countess rested no longer with her. Oppressed with the most painful sensations, she had continued inattentive to the officious assiduities of Mirrand; at length recovering from her reverie, she thanked the woman for her kindness, and desired to be left alone. The other, finding she was not likely to gain her confidence, withdrew; secretly exulting, that she should soon be rid of a dangerous rival in her lady's favour.

Near two hours Adelaide had been a prey to the utmost inquietude; when the Countess suddenly entered the chamber.

"Pardon my abruptness, my dear child, and the disobliging things which escaped me in the moment of passion. Many vexations in life have made my temper irritable and hasty; I acknowledge my error, dear Adelaide; the governor has convinced me that you are perfectly blameless."

This concession was so totally unexpected, that the amiable girl, for a moment, forgot every cause of displeasure that had occupied her mind: she kissed the offered hand that was extended to her, and thanked the Countess for her kindness and candour. She accompanied her to the saloon; Donna Padilla rose, and received her with an attention the most flattering: the grateful Adelaide felt her obligations to the governor, for the kind reception he had procured her, and returned, with great sweetness, all their uncommon civilities.

The supper table was attended by the two gentlemen: and the tranquil air of Adelaide,
with

with the politeness of the ladies, was viewed with pleasure by Don Lopez, and surprise by Don Felix: the former was marked in his very respectful attentions to her; the latter did homage with his eyes, when unobserved: but his devoirs were all confined to the Countess, whose wit, and more than usual vivacity, gave a lively colouring to her elegant entertainment.

When Adelaide retired, and revolved on the occurrences of the day, she was equally hurt and gratified:—she respected the generous governor, but was shocked at the indecorous and sarcastic expressions the Countess had uttered:—and though she had no doubt but Don Lopez had influenced that lady to make her such an unexpected concession, yet there was a capriciousness, an inconsistency of disposition in her conduct, that precluded either esteem or confidence; and possibly the following day might subject her to fresh insults. From this apprehension she was a little relieved, by the expectation of an

answer from Isabella; which, if not favourable to her wishes, she resolved not to hesitate in accepting an asylum with the sister of Don Lopez; for no where could she experience more caprice, arrogance, and the haughty air of conferring benefits, which wounds a delicate mind, than when under the protection of her present patroness.

The next day Adelaide impatiently waited Antoine's return from the post-house, and flew to meet him as he entered the room, that her letter might not be delivered before the Countess:—the precaution was unnecessary; no letter came, and she retired to her room under much inquietude. A thousand possible occurrences offered themselves to her mind, to account for her disappointment: she endeavoured to be composed; it was only one day more; doubtless she would hear then.

This day was passed in a pleasurable party, to a very charming natural grotto, formed in
the

the side of a neighbouring mountain: the wild flowers that grew round it shed a delicious perfume: at a small distance was a most beautiful cascade, that falling into several little basons, and from thence breaking down the craggy sides of the rocks, formed a large and transparent rivulet at the foot of the mountain, and divided into several smaller streams, that watered the plains between the hills.

Though Adelaide felt the pang of disappointment, yet she was not so abstracted, as to be insensible to the beauties that met her sight, or inattentive to the ladies, who vied with each other in shewing her marks of kindness: indeed, so lavish were they of their compliments and caresses, that she felt both shame and remorse, at the coldness with which her heart received them, and charged herself with ingratitude.

Another day now opened upon Adelaide; and again the much wished for letter occupied

her mind :—again she was disappointed ; and the flatterer, hope, no longer formed excuses, or reasons to account for it. Isabella was either absent, or had repented of her seemingly generous offer ; or else her letter had fallen into the hands of her parents, and they had forbidden the execution of her friendly design. “ Well, then,” said she, with a deep sigh, “ to whatever cause I owe the downfall of my hopes, the event is certain, and I must give up all expectations of any assistance from her :—the point now to be determined, is, whether I shall remain with the Countess, whose first fondness seems to be returned, or accept the governor’s offer : neither was agreeable to her wishes ; but she was to decide, because the governor would expect her answer. Much perplexed, she concluded to avoid any conversation on the subject with Don Lopez, until she had retired, and meditated on her pillow.

Once a week it was customary with the governor to receive visits in form, and have an

an entertainment for gentlemen only: this was the day, and Don Felix could not get excused from being one of the party: he complained bitterly to the ladies, of the happy hours he was obliged to lose, detached from their society; and his charming Countess gave herself full credit for the sorrow he so well expressed:—but politeness was a rigid exactor, and the necessity for his absence unavoidable; she therefore dismissed him with a tenderness, both of words and manner, well calculated to lessen his chagrin.

Donna Padilla, who was now their inseparable companion, proposed taking a stroll to the grotto before-mentioned, which was a small distance off, though rather a long walk for a Spanish lady; therefore, as she seemed to consider the distance as nothing, surely the other ladies, more in the habits of walking, could make no objection.

Attended only by a servant of Padilla's, they proceeded to the foot of the mountain:

a thick wood lay to the left, rising on one side, and extending to another chain of hills, which were some of them barren, and others well wooded. The ladies entered the grotto, rambled on the sides of the mountain, charmed with the diversity of natural beauties around them, until the sun, declining behind the tops of the hills, warned them of approaching night; and they thought it necessary to bend their steps towards home.

They had scarce advanced ten paces beyond the mountain, when three men, masked, were seen to issue from the wood, and instantly laid hold of the affrighted Adelaide. The ladies screamed as loudly as she did; the servant blustered, and attempted to rescue her; but a pistol presented to his head, by one of the three men, while the other two bore off the unfortunate girl into the wood, effectually silenced him, and precluded all attempts to recover her. When this fellow saw his associates had succeeded, he quickly followed,

followed, and left the ladies to lament aloud the dreadful fate of their dear companion.

After the first violence a little subsided, the Countess observed, "one thing had struck her in the very instant of her fright, which was, that though Adelaide shrieked at first, yet she seemed to make no opposition, nor uttered a word when they were carrying her off; from whence she was inclined to infer, that the event was not unexpected, or that the men were not totally unknown to her."

"How singular," cried Donna Padilla, "that the same observation fastened on my mind; yet I would not venture to breathe it, till sanctioned by your discernment.—Pray, Clodio, did you see the young lady struggle, or repeat her cries?"

"No, Signora," replied the servant, "she seemed quite silent."

Indeed, they were perfectly right, for after the first scream, finding herself lifted from the

earth, terror overcame her senses, and they bore her fainting into the wood. The two friends were so terrified, and so occupied in making strictures on the strange conduct of poor Adelaide, that they crept very slowly home, and then thought it necessary to examine the servants, to see if any suspicious circumstances appeared against her. Mittand said, "that she had seen her twice, speaking privately to Antoine." The man was interrogated on the subject of this private conference:—he appeared to be greatly confused; but at length confessed, "that he had secretly taken a letter for Mademoiselle Adelaide to the post-house; and that she had met him two days following, in expectation of having an answer; but none had arrived."

This deposition was sufficient to criminate her; and her dear friends made no scruple to avow, before all the servants, that her whole conduct proved she had been carrying on some shameful intrigue; and was well acquainted with the plot for carrying her away

5

that

that evening from their protection:—under that conviction, it was perfectly unnecessary to alarm their friends, and disturb the harmony of the governor's entertainment; because pursuit would be fruitless, and the object too worthless to be sought after.

Mittand pretended to recollect many circumstances that told against her; though at the time she would not distress her lady, who loved the ungrateful runaway so dearly, that she knew it would make her unhappy; and for her part, she had no doubt but Signeur Don Felix was in the plot. This opinion was neither joined in, nor reprobated: the Countess only observed, "she should be better enabled to judge, when she saw him the next day." The servants were dismissed, and the ladies left to talk over this afflicting business to themselves.

Antoine, however, who had his own suspicions, resolved to prepare Don Felix for his next interview with the ladies; he there-

fore privately hastened to the governor's, and begged leave to speak with that gentleman. Don Felix instantly came to him.

"I beg your pardon, Seigneur; but I thought it my duty to acquaint you, that Mademoiselle Adelaide is safely carried off; and that our malicious Madame Mittand has persuaded our lady, and the Donna, that you have carried her away; and so——"

"Carried who away?" exclaimed Don Felix:—Adelaide carried off! What is it you mean?"

The man briefly related the foregoing circumstances, which he had not time to finish, before Don Felix stamped like a mad man:—"I know nothing of this," he cried; "fly this instant; examine the servant that attended them, and gain every possible intelligence."

Antoine obeyed him, very greatly surprised to find he was mistaken in his conjectures.

Don

Don Felix, meantime, knew not on whom to glance the eye of suspicion, unless it was the governor:—he had marked his extreme attention to Adelaide:—he knew that he had made her an offer of his hand, and that she had declined it; therefore, in the agitation of the moment, he drew a positive conclusion in his own mind, that the governor had taken methods to secure her person. Heated by this idea, he sent in for Don Lopez, who apologised to his guests, and entered the room where the young officer was walking up and down at a furious rate.

“What are your commands? What ails you?” asked the governor.

Don Felix advanced quick to him.

“Tell me,” said he, in a lofty tone, “What you have done with Adelaide? Who are the wretches that have taken her from the Countess; and where you design to conceal her? I will know, by St. Jago,”
exclaimed

exclaimed he, in a voice almost choked by passion; and mistaking the surprise of Don Lopez for confusion and shame; "Attempt not to deceive me," he added, drawing his sword, "I will die before I will give her up."

"Rash young man!" cried the other, "put up your sword; I neither fear that, or you:—but I would die in defence of innocence:—Say, tell me, what of Adelaide? Who has taken her away? I swear by all the host of heaven, I know not what you allude to; but I am deeply interested for that lovely girl:—quickly tell me what you mean?"

The solemn air, and apparent candour, with which the governor addressed him, disconcerted Don Felix, and at least gave birth to doubts of his guilt; he therefore briefly repeated the intelligence he had received from Antoine.

Never

Never was astonishment and concern more manifest, than in his countenance.

“ I swear to you, Don Felix, that I know not the author of this vile attempt, and that I will pursue the villains through Spain, but what I will recover her !”

“ Ah !” cried Don Felix, cured at once of his suspicions, by the rage and fire that darted from the eyes of the man before him, “ Whom can we suspect ? Where can we direct our search ?”

“ I knew not,” said the governor, “ that you were so warmly interested in her behalf : but this is not a time for explanations :— while I apologise to my guests for shortening their entertainment, do you hasten to the Countess ; make the most minute investigation ; servants and horses shall be ordered immediately.”

Without staying to reply, Don Felix flew out of the room, and was presently before the ladies.

ladies. His presence was equally unexpected and unwelcome.

“How!” cried the Countess, “have you broke from your party thus early?”

He was too great an adept in the art of deception, not to have recovered from his first emotions, and to assume, for a few moments, an air of unconcern.

“Yes; the company were about to retire, and Don Lopez will soon follow me.”

The ladies looked at each other.

“Has any thing extraordinary affected you?” added he, “you appear discomposed?”

“Why, indeed,” answered the Countess, whose presence of mind never deserted her, “a very odd affair has happened this evening; I have met with an uncommon piece of ingratitude, and am mortified in feeling myself

myself a dupe to the artifice of an apparent novice. You will be surprised to hear, that Adelaide, the innocent-looking Adelaide, has eloped from my protection."

"Eloped!" exclaimed Don Felix, almost off his guard, "for heaven's sake, what do you mean?—'tis impossible—eloped did you say?"

"Certainly I did," answered she, with an indignant glance. She then repeated what had befallen them, with this little difference only, that the girl gave a scream of joy when she saw the men; threw herself into their protection, and went off without even a show of reluctance.

Don Felix was astonished at this account, which was confirmed by Donna Padilla.

"Heavens!" said he, "is it possible deceit can dwell in such a bosom? Tell me, I entreat you, to which side of the mountain did they bend their steps?"

"Towards

“Towards Pampeluna, I think,” replied Padilla: “certain I am, they took their route to the left of the city.”

“Then they shall be pursued,” said he, abruptly; and was leaving the room.

“How, Don Felix!” cried the Countess, “can you intend to pursue an ungrateful runaway? And to what purpose pursue a girl, who has voluntarily withdrawn herself from my protection? How are you interested to force her from the society she has chosen?” Observing his confusion, she went on; “Be assured, we have all been deceived in that girl; she is artful and imprudent; therefore, having chosen for herself, I ought to be glad she has so soon withdrawn the veil that blinded me in her favour.”

Before Don Felix could reply, the governor joined them in much agitation: to him the whole was repeated, with fresh aggravations.

“Impossible!”

"Impossible! impossible!" cried he, "I cannot, will not believe that lovely creature is the child of guilt or duplicity: some vile plot has been formed against her; nor will I rest till every step is taken to discover the authors of it. I will instantly dispatch a troop on every side of the mountains; one or other may be successful, and rescue innocence from the power of villains."

He flew from them, leaving Don Felix rooted to the place, and the ladies in much confusion, exchanging very significant glances, but not very satisfactory ones.

Don Felix recovering from his reverie, "there is no doubt," said he, "but the governor will be successful: whether the steps he is about to take may be acceptable to the fugitive or not; time must determine. I shall concern myself no further in the business; and I hope," added he, softening his voice, "that my lovely Countess will not
grieve

grieve for the loss of a companion, who is apparently so unworthy."

Nothing could be better calculated to restore harmony to the features, and peace to the mind, than those few words. The Countess instantly resumed a placidity of countenance; though with an affected sigh, she regretted that her confidence had been so much abused: — "but 'tis ever thus," said she, "that ingenuous minds are duped by artifice, and a semblance of innocence."

The remainder of the evening was passed in the most uncharitable conjectures respecting poor Adelaide; who, without hesitation, was pronounced to be an "artful impostor," and a "little deceitful adventurer."

When Don Felix returned to the castle, he found the governor still extremely agitated.

"I have sent off, to the different roads, near thirty men," said he, "and I hope
heaven

heaven will grant me success—will enable me to recover that much-injured young woman, on whose virtue and innocence I would rest all my happiness, both in this world and the next.”

“That is strongly said,” replied Don Felix, “the ladies ——”

“Tell me not of the ladies; they are her enemies: the Countess is envious; Donna Padilla jealous, furious and revengeful. I know her capable of any atrocity to gratify her passions; her rank in society obliges me to show her public civilities; but she is not the woman I would recommend for an intimate to any one. Without being vain on the distinction, I must acquaint you, that, through common friends, I have been informed my addresses to that lady would most probably prove successful:—she has an immense fortune, but her disposition is well known to me; and I have been deaf to every offer and allurements; nor in all probability should I ever, at my time of life, thought of marriage, had

had I not felt myself uncommonly attached to the charming Adelaide."

"But," said Don Felix, "is not her declining such an offer, so very advantageous, a proof that she had some other engagement?"

"By no means; I am no fool or coxcomb; I can believe a delicate-minded young woman may refuse a man of my age, and a good fortune, without any other prepossession, and that the integrity of her heart would never permit her to give her hand from interested motives alone; yet I would be contented to receive it, accompanied only by esteem, and depend upon my own conduct to inspire her with warmer sentiments.—Oh that I could but see her restored to us!"

It was in vain that Don Felix urged the improbability, that any but a lover could think of carrying off a young woman, who had only her person to recommend her—and the conviction that it must be done with her own consent, as she made no resistance.

"To

“To be plain with you,” answered the governor, I suspect the truth of that report; it was not intended either of us should have been informed of the circumstance: no messenger was sent from the Countess, as might naturally have been expected, if she had felt real concern.”

“Why,” asked Don Felix, “Have you any suspicions that the ladies are concerned in the plot?”

“Not merely suspicions; my opinion amounts to a certainty; I have closely attended to them, and I have read their malignity and baseness in every look and word:—depend upon it, they have spirited her away; where to, it shall be my unwearied endeavour to discover, for I shall know no peace till I can hear of her safety.”

As Don Felix did not appear to coincide exactly with this opinion, they soon retired to their separate apartments, though not to sleep.

The

The generous, noble-minded governor, had no doubts of Adelaide's innocence; he saw she was the victim to some base passions, and trembled for the treatment she might be exposed to from her enemies. He disdained the idea of interrogating, or tampering with servants; yet, on this very interesting business, he conceived himself justified, for once, in deviating from this rule; and therefore resolved, in the morning, that one of the men should minutely sift the servant who had accompanied the ladies in their walk.

Mean time Don Felix was a prey to the most tormenting vexation:—from the first moment he had seen Adelaide at his father's, he felt a violent inclination for her person:—he was a man of the world; no novice in intrigue or adventures; he studied the disposition of Mittand, the Countess's woman, in ten minutes; and within twenty-four hours after their arrival, by a few compliments, and a few ducats, he was perfectly informed of every thing she knew respecting Adelaide's situation; and hesitated not to believe, that

6 by

by proper management, he should soon seduce the affections and honour of this friendless girl; for the very circumstances that ought to have made her respectable and sacred in the eyes of a man of honour, served only as motives to stimulate him to seek her destruction.

With this view he had followed the Countess, whose character was quickly developed: he saw she was vain, loquacious, and fond of admiration: that she treated her companion as a dependant, and watched every eye with jealous care, lest one glance should be directed to a person she thought so very inferior to herself, and of so little consequence in the world; forgetting, in those moments of envy, that her very rudeness, impertinence and jealousy, gave real consideration to the object of it, and raised her in the estimation of those capable of distinguishing merit: such were the sentiments of Isabella and the governor; nay, even of Don Felix. His penetration pierced through the thin veil of affection the Coun-

ters sometimes pretended, to cover the malignancy of her heart; and he saw that he must gain her first, before he durst open his intentions to Adelaide.

Whilst he was pursuing this plan, and had contrived to get Antoine in his interest, his man brought to him the letter, addressed to his sister, which Adelaide had given him to take to the post-house. Extremely surprised that any correspondence should exist between them, he scrupled not to commit an act of baseness, to satisfy his curiosity: the contents did not tend to lessen his surprise; but he resolved to make his advantage of it; and, after a day and night's deliberation, he engaged his servant to enter into a scheme, to procure men, and carry off Adelaide, under the appearance of being employed by Isabella, to convey her to a convent.

Having every thing ready, he took the precaution to have a letter written, as if from his sister, and sent it privately to Pampeluna,

that,

that it might arrive by the post. This letter would come to hand the following day; and had not the plan of some other person superceded his, Adelaide would have infallibly fallen into his hands.

Antoine having been in his confidence, though in a limited degree, when he heard what had befallen Adelaide, immediately conjectured Don Felix was the author of the plot, and thought to make his court to him, by running to the castle and acquainting him with its success.

The vexation of Don Felix to find his well-laid scheme rendered abortive, has been described; and now, when retired to his room, convinced that the governor was not the contriver of his disappointment, the suspicions of that gentleman began to operate upon his mind:—he recollected the looks and behaviour of the ladies, with many circumstances that denoted their envy and ill-will; and no longer hesitated to believe, that

Don Lopez was right in his conjectures. He also determined to pierce through this mystery, and thought he should succeed by redoubling his attention to the Countess, joining in invectives against Adelaide, and pretending to feel the utmost indifference and contempt for her.

The next morning he was early in his devoirs to the Countess; and she was not a little gratified by the tenderness of his manner."

"How kind in you to be so attentive, to console me for the loss of my little protégée! indeed, I am much hurt at her ingratitude; but it is generally a thankless office to take young girls under one's protection."

"My charming Countess, think of her no more; whether innocent or guilty, no blame can be attached to you: your kind treatment of her was seen by every one; therefore, if she is ungrateful, she is unworthy a sigh; and if innocent, which I confess does
not

not strike me ; for who would think it necessary to use force, or employ stratagem, to get possession of a girl who has so few attractions ?—no, no, depend upon it some scheme was intended when first she sought your protection, which not answering, she has returned to her former associates.”

This speech and conjecture, so untrue, so unjust, and so little probable, quite delighted the lady, and put her into the very best of humours. He did not fail to profit by the disposition he had raised ; both parties grew uncommonly tender, and their confidence was carried to its utmost extent.

They had passed two very rapid hours together, before they were interrupted by the presence of Donna Padilla, who was almost immediately followed by the governor.

“ Well, Don Lopez,” cried the Countess, with a look of high animation, which ill accorded with her words, “ have you

heard any thing relative to our poor Adelaide?"

"Not yet, madam," he replied, "but I impatiently expect some intelligence."

"Upon my word," said she, "I begin to think Don Felix is more just in his opinion of her, than you and I, who are but too partial, I believe."

"And what opinion is that?" asked he.

"Why, he thinks that she is—I mean that she was—that—a—. What was it, Don Felix, you said? I protest my mind is so disturbed, that I have already forgotten."

"You can at least, madam," said the governor, "tell us what opinion you have conceived, grounded on what the gentleman did say."

"Bless me! why I believe it was, that she was an ungrateful girl, and engaged in some shameful intrigue, which you know is unpardonable. But pray let us say no more on a subject that so infinitely distresses me.—I hope you will be successful in your undertaking,

taking, and then every thing will be elucidated."

"Most devoutly I hope so," answered he, "but I make no scruple to say, that I would risk my life on the chance, that whatever may be her situation, honour and innocence are the inmates of her bosom, and will, I trust, protect her from the malice of her enemies."

Donna Padilla thought this a strong reliance against unfavourable appearances; but most cordially hoped the governor would be justified in his sudden and violent attachment, which surely could not be known to the young woman, or she would have at least suspended her present plan, and have waited the effects of her powerful attractions.

"Madam," answered he, with a look of ineffable contempt, "this young woman, this estimable young woman, was perfectly acquainted with my sentiments; I entreated her to honour me with her hand, and if she

declined it, it was from motives that did honour to the delicacy of her mind, and increased my admiration and respect."

"My dear governor," cried she, with an affected laugh, to veil her vexation and malice, "you abound in faith, and shut your eyes against conviction; that she held a secret correspondence, is most certain; Antoine took her letters to the post, and for the last two days she had been uncommonly anxious for answers, and watched him constantly on his return:—no doubt measures were taken in consequence of those letters; and when she pressed us to walk to the grotto, she well knew whom she was to expect.—What say you to this, governor?"

"That I am still an infidel, madam, and perfectly convinced she met no friends that she expected, though possibly she is sacrificed to the malice of such as pretended an affection for her:—but if you please, for the present we will drop the subject."

"By all means," said the Countess, "'tis a most unpleasing one to me; happy shall I be

be to hear, that a girl I treated as my own child, or rather as a dear sister, may be exonerated from the charges of ingratitude and duplicity : we will at least suspend judgment, however strongly appearances are against her."

Don Lopez had much penetration; certain glances between Don Felix and the Countess; the languishing air of the lady, and the defection of memory on his first entrance, did not escape his observation : he saw there was a perfect good understanding between them, and the respect he had at first entertained for the Countess, abated in proportion as he discovered the depravity of her heart. His visit was short; anxiety for the fate of Adelaide carried him back to the castle, where he impatiently waited the return of the persons employed in tracing the steps of the ravishers.

The coolness of his manner, and the sarcastic observations he had thrown out, greatly
E 5 enraged

enraged Donna Padilla : love, and a desire of revenge, roused in her every violent passion that could be formed in the mind of a proud vindictive woman : with difficulty she restrained herself before Don Felix, whose stay was not long after the governor took leave ; and when he put an end to his visit, the smothered rage burst forth.

“ My dear Countess,” exclaimed she, “ I will punish this ridiculous governor, by making him blush at his attachment, or perish in the attempt ; that little insignificant wretch shall never triumph over me ; I will render her contemptible and the tool of my revenge, or she shall never more appear in the world.”

The Countess, whose mind was occupied by much more pleasing images ; who conceived she had completely fixed Don Felix in her chains, and was deceived by his well pretended indifference for Adelaide, no longer retained her violent hatred against an object, removed from exciting either jealousy
or

or envy: 'tis true, she never desired to see her more, but she was content that she should remain quietly in the situation chosen for her. Roused from her agreeable reveries by the violence of her companion, she said very languidly, "As we can have no more to fear from the girl, we may as well let the affair drop; confinement will sufficiently punish her, and her retreat will, I hope, never be discovered."

"Hope!" cried Padilla, "and shall I trust my hopes of future happiness, and the possible chance of being discovered and disgraced, to the chapter of accidents, which, through the busy, officious search of Don Lopez, may develope all our scheme: no, I will make sure work; me she has irreparably injured, and I thought you were as warmly engaged in a plan to get rid of her, as myself."

"Doubt it not," replied the Countess; "I hate the girl heartily, and never shall desire to have her in my train again; I only fear your violence will throw you off your

guard, excite suspicion, and occasion her place of residence to be guessed at”

Donna Padilla was a little cooled by this observation: a long conversation ensued, in which their future plans met with mutual approbation.

Mean time the governor felt the most poignant concern, and extreme impatience, to hear of Adelaide. Towards the close of evening several of his people returned, without bringing any information tending to remove his inquietude: not the smallest intelligence could be obtained, and the most probable conjecture was, that the ravishers must have gone over some unfrequented path in the mountains, without being met by any persons in their way.

Don Lopez was agonised by his apprehensions for the unfortunate girl, and the treatment she might be exposed to from such unprincipled wretches as were capable of an
action

action so atrocious. Again he sent off the men, to search on foot every part of the adjacent mountains; though the length of time now elapsed gave him but feeble hopes that they would be so fortunate as to discover her.

Don Felix returned at night to the castle, and, with consummate art, contrived to hide his particular interest in the fate of Adelaide: he spoke of her with concern and pity, but it was in unimpassioned language; and ascribed his first emotions and rudeness to the governor, as the effect of a sudden passion, raised by the supposition, that the governor had chosen to have the little girl to himself, and had made use of unjustifiable means for that purpose. He asked pardon for his behaviour, and by an artful turn in the conversation, at length owned himself convinced, by the testimony of the ladies, and the deposition of the servant, with several concurrent circumstances, that the girl must have voluntarily thrown herself into the hands of the men, and, whatever

whatever were her motives, must be unworthy of their concern, though they might feel pity for the irregularity of her conduct.

Don Lopez heard him with civility, and was at no loss to divine the cause which had produced such an alteration in his sentiments; without therefore entering into any controversy on the subject, he observed, "every man had a right to think for himself, and draw his own conclusions; he should trust to time, and his best endeavours to develope the mystery; till then, he never could bring himself to think unfavourably of Adelaide."

The succeeding morning arrived, without giving them any satisfaction; Don Lopez, restless and unhappy, could not refrain going to pay his usual civilities to the Countess; partly because suspicions would not warrant his deficiencies in politeness; and also in the hope, that chance might throw some clue in his way, in a lucky unguarded moment, to direct his search.

When

When he appeared before her, he found she was preparing to go out.

“Ha! governor,” cried she, “I am going to Donna Padilla’s; she has sent for me; she is ill. I am excessively afflicted; she is a most charming woman, the ornament of your little city:—Will you escort me?”

He felt very little inclination to the visit, but it was inconsistent with the gallantry of a Spaniard to decline a requested attendance; he therefore accompanied her to the apartment of the indisposed lady: she was reclined on a sofa, in a most becoming undress, with all the langour of sickness, and the most insinuating softness of manner. Her large expressive black eyes seemed to have lost their fierceness; without diminishing their lustre; the tone of her voice was melting and engaging: in fine, she appeared a most interesting object.

She

She thanked her friends for their kind visit, particularly Don Lopez, "whose attentions did her so much honour and pleasure."

The mind of man is composed of combustible materials; strike but the flint that conveys fire to the passions, he is thrown off his guard, and is hurried away by the impetuosity of the moment.

All men have self-love, and some little spark of vanity lying dormant in a remote corner of the heart; the languishing looks of the sick lady; the softened, speaking eye, and the gentle sound of a naturally harmonious voice, were altogether so new, so unexpected by the governor, who had always seen her heretofore, bold, assuming and coquetish, that for a few moments he lost the remembrance of what she had been, in the contemplation of what she was now: he felt gratified by her tenderness, and returned her compliments with much gallantry. The most seductive

cive softness was exerted on her side ; the Countess paid her admired friend a thousand compliments, until the adulation became rather too gross, and recalled the governor to his reason, which, for a short time, had been under the dominion of his senses. He recollected himself, and rose to take leave.

“ So soon,” cried the invalid, “ must you leave me so soon ? but indeed, I am already too much indebted to your politeness for this short visit ; it is unreasonable to expect you should mortify yourself in company, so little calculated to give pleasure.”

Again he was staggered, and about to resume his seat ; when a look he caught passing between the two ladies at once decided the point, and with very little ceremony he took leave, half ashamed of the weakness that had betrayed his judgment into an indulgence of his senses.

In

In the course of this day all his messengers returned unsuccessful, and he was in despair for the safety of Adelaide, without one ray of hope, one possible chance of knowing in what direction she was carried off: he saw all his endeavours to discover her place of abode must be fruitless. Convinced in his own mind that the ladies were no strangers to her situation, the more he reflected on their duplicity and art, the more he reproached himself for the temporary illusion he had so recently given way to.

He passed a sleepless night, and the following morning Don Felix told him that Donna Padilla was so ill as to see no company. This intelligence gave him very little concern: one sole idea occupied his mind, and if he thought of her at all, it was as the enemy of Adelaide.

Mean time Don Felix improved his intimacy with the Countess; pretended a violent affection for her, without losing sight of his design

design to penetrate into her secrets, and, if possible, discover if she was concerned in the villainy practised upon Adelaide.

While all those several persons were employed on their different schemes, we will look back upon the unfortunate girl, who was innocently the cause of their distress, and as undeservedly the sufferer, from the envy and jealousy of the two ladies.

When Adelaide felt herself forcibly seized, and hurried away, she sent forth a piercing shriek :—a most brutal rebuke, accompanied by actions equally insolent, so entirely overpowered her senses, that she fainted, and was incapable of making any resistance. In this state she was conveyed to some distance; on recovering her reason, she found herself in a sort of cave, with three men. Her first idea was, that Lefare had discovered her, and got possession of her person. She trembled with the apprehension.

“ Tell

“Tell me,” said she, in a faltering voice, “where I am, and who it is that has caused me to be thus violently torn from my friends?”

“We have nothing to tell you,” answered one of them; there you must put on these clothes; you will make a tight little fellow when you are dressed.”

“Me,” said she, shrinking back, “I put on these boy’s clothes? to what purpose? indeed I cannot.”

“Well, if you can’t,” replied the other, “we must, that’s all the difference;” and he advanced towards her.”

“Stop,” cried she, agonized by the style of his countenance, “stop, I will obey you if it must be so; only retire without for a few moments.”

They seemed to hesitate; again she requested them to leave her, and at length they complied. With hasty trembling hands she proceeded to equip herself; but, unaccustomed to such habiliments, it was attended both with
time

time and difficulty. More than once the men called to her, and tired with waiting, entered abruptly, as she had nearly completed her dress. They then bundled up her own clothes, and two of them taking her under each arm, whilst the third led the way, they hurried her across the mountains, over dangerous and almost impassable crags. She found it was in vain to offer any resistance, and, silently imploring the protection of heaven, she went on, till, overpowered by fatigue, she suddenly stopt, and in a tremulous voice declared she could not proceed a yard further.

They vented a few violent execrations, but perceiving that she was sinking to the ground, they lifted her down the side of a steep hill, and seated her in a thick under-wood, almost impervious to the view of any straggling passenger. Here she was permitted to rest, and ruminate on the variety of misfortunes that had befallen her, and to form conjectures to whom she was indebted for

this last insult, which threatened her with every thing horrible in its termination.

“ Ah !” thought she, “ had I accepted the offer made by the generous governor, I should not now be destitute of protection, nor exposed to such terrible apprehensions. Yet, consistently with my own feelings of honour and delicacy, I acted right. Alas ! how incompetent am I to judge what I ought to have done, stranger as I am to the world, and its deceptions.”

Deeply afflicted, she earnestly addressed her heavenly protector to preserve her in the trials she was destined to undergo. In about three hours the moon arose in full splendor, spreading over the mountains its silvery beams, and discriminating every surrounding object.

“ Come,” said one of the fellows, “ you have sufficiently rested ; we must go ; a short
time

time now will bring us over the mountains, where a carriage will take you on."

"A carriage!" said she, starting, "Where then am I going? and who is interested enough for me, to send a carriage? surely it cannot be Donna Isabella?"

"It signifies little, what Donna it is; you will be taken care of," answered he.

She saw the men were faithful to their trust; the mention of a carriage gave her some faint glimmerings of hope, that Isabella had taken this method to serve her, to avoid the suspicion of being concerned in it.

A mind distressed eagerly catches at shadowy hopes, and indulges for a time the most flattering chimeras; till fresh disappointments chill the warm expectations of fancy, and add proportionate misery, as those hopes are tumbled from the summit they were raised on, to the precipice of despair.

So

So fared it with poor Adelaide; after incredible fatigue, from the speed they made over rough and unbeaten tracts, among the hills, they began to descend, and at length she saw a valley beneath, and something like a road way. They reached the bottom; her strength and spirits were exhausted; and, when she perceived a chaise, it was with extreme difficulty, and assisted by the men, that she got seated in it, scarcely alive. Two men came in with her, the other sat with the post-boy; they drove at a great rate; but she was so ill, as to be incapable of judging of time or distance.

They travelled round the foot of the mountains, and at length stopt at a cottage, in a small hamlet, seated in a little valley: here some milk and cakes were offered to her; she drank eagerly of the milk, and it refreshed her; she gazed round, to see if any of the poor cottagers were in view, but no such, meeting her eye, all information was denied to her; she was obliged to resign herself with
patience

patience to the plan of her conductors. Silent, and alternately oppressed with hopes and fears, she trusted in providence to preserve her from evil.

At length they entered on a narrow road, between two high hills, covered with wood to the very top; the moon no longer befriended them; and in a very short time, the carriage stopped.

“ You must now alight,” said one of the men, “ the chaise can proceed no further.”

“ What then am I to do?” asked the trembling Adelaide.

“ Walk!” returned he, sullenly.

They assisted her out of the carriage; resistance could not avail her, and therefore she attempted none; two of them only accompanied her, the third, who rode with the post-boy, she saw no more.

They proceeded on, through a deep and narrow glen; the trees on the top of the hills almost met; the very faint rays of light that now and then darted upon them, as the wind waved them to and fro, served only to make darkness visible, and to discover the horrid gloom that pervaded round her.

Alone, in such a place, and with such men, the terrified girl could scarcely drag her trembling limbs along; her heart beat, her spirits failed, she gasped for breath, and was nearly sinking to the earth, when one of the fellows exclaimed,

“ I know now, by the sound of the waters, we are near the castle. Come, mistress, pluck up your spirits; I know you are frightened, but we shall soon place you in safety.”

This assurance recalled her to life; the hope of being relieved from her present dreadful situation, superceded any apprehension for what evils might follow. She exerted

exerted her strength, and found they soon entered a wood: the path way was narrow, or they wandered from it, for she frequently struck against the trees; and her companions cursed the moon for hiding its beams, now they were got out of the mountains, and the light was so necessary to guide them through the wood.

Suddenly, the pale queen of night broke through the passing clouds, and discovered to the fearful Adelaide the dreary and gloomy wood that surrounded her; she heard the distant fall of waters; she thought too, she heard the roaring of wolves; she could discern no regular path, likely to terminate soon towards any habitable mansion; and the castle they mentioned, she had cause to fear was at a great distance.

While agitated by these terrors, they suddenly turned to the left, where the passage became more difficult; and the moon, being again obscured, her horror became almost

insupportable,—when she was instantaneously and unexpectedly relieved, by one of the men crying out, “We are just home;—I can discern the wall:” and in less than five minutes she found they were really before some building, and soon heard the sound of a loud bell that they had rung, whose deep tone, in that lonely gloom, and solemn hour, startled her.

It was not long before she heard the chains of the gate fall, the bolts undrawn, and the creaking hinges giving way —The gate opened; a man, tall, meagre, and swarthy, stood before them, with a lamp. The fright Adelaide was in, magnified the being she saw into a huge ferocious giant; every limb trembled; she shrunk back, involuntarily laying hold of her nearest companion, as if imploring his protection.

“You are come sooner than I expected,” said the man of the castle, in no very soft tone; “but walk in, I shall soon be ready for you.”

They followed him without speaking,—terror froze up every faculty of the affrighted girl; she walked on, mechanically, her eyes wandering round, without discriminating objects. Passing through a large court overgrown with grass, they entered, through a portico, a large gloomy hall; the lamp shone dimly on the vaulted roof; the man that bore it stalked on with an air of solemnity; and, when she recollected herself in the power of such persons, the blood congealed about her heart; and just as they arrived at the foot of an immense staircase, she reeled against the man next to her, and, but for his instant help, she must have fallen senseless on the marble pavement.

When she recovered, she found herself supported by an old woman, who had plentifully sprinkled her with water, and now offered her some cordial, in a broken cup. The men appeared busy kindling a fire, and drinking. Adelaide rejected the offered cup; a few heart-felt sighs issued from her bosom,

which were followed by an hysterical flood of tears.

The woman spoke to her; but it was in Spanish, and she understood it not. The men were conversing in the same language. She looked round her; she was in a large vaulted room, of immense height; a gallery with iron rails run round it; the windows high and small; a dark brown wainscot, and a prodigious large fire place, gave the whole a most gloomy and melancholy appearance: the floor was of the same colour, and seemed decayed by time; all the mouldings were buried in dust, and the cold chill of the place, proved that it had long been uninhabited. At the further end of this immense-sized room, hung a dark green curtain, which reached to the floor; long-backed chairs, covered with stuff, of the same colour, old and decayed; with two large round brown tables, comprised all the furniture.

When

When Adelaide had examined the room, and its decorations, she addressed herself to the man, who had heretofore spoken to her in French.

“ Pray, friend,” said she, mildly, “ have the goodness to tell me now, where I am? and why I was brought here?”

“ You are now in a comfortable habitation,” answered he, “ and in good time you will know all that is proper.—I know nothing more of the business than yourself.”

“ You can at least tell me, who the person was that employed you? and if I am here as a prisoner, or to meet a friend?”

“ A noble lady employed me;—you are not your own mistress I believe; therefore would do well to please those that have the charge of you.—Ask me no more questions; I cannot answer them.”

Adelaide saw she had nothing to expect, or hope for, from him. The old woman brought her some bread, dried fruit, and a

bottle of small wine; she then drew up the curtain before mentioned, and discovered a bed, placed in a sort of alcove, made of green cloth; she made signs to Adelaide that this was intended for her: excessively fatigued, both in mind and body, she rose, and threw herself on it, obliging the woman to set by her. The men continued drinking and talking for some hours; they at length retired, making a sign for the woman to follow them; she obeyed, locking the door carefully after her.

Adelaide, now left to her own reflections, saw all the horrors of her fate; confined in this remote and gloomy mansion, with persons who could not converse with her,—who could neither be moved by supplications, or convinced by arguments;—who seemed, by the ferocity of their looks, to be strangers to pity or gentleness;—alas! where could she turn for consolation? or what ray of hope could she now admit to her bosom?

After

After many painful conjectures,—sometimes, that it was Lifare, who had discovered her, and had her brought to a place so solitary, that it seemed calculated only for rapine and murder, and a retreat for banditti; but then, the expences attending this journey, and the small chance of her being found at the grotto, where she had only been once before, rendered it very unlikely it could be the plan of a robber.—Then she thought on Don Felix; and at length, on the Countess;—but how should either of those persons be acquainted with the situation of this castle?

In short, she wearied herself with improbable conjectures, without being able to fix on any decided one. She had passed about three hours alone, when she observed a faint glimmering light spread itself over the room; the dawn of day was ushered in by the singing of birds, whose tuneful voices gave inexpressible anguish to Adelaide.

“ Ah!” cried she, “ happy, and at liberty! they hop from tree to tree; enjoy the fragrant breezes of the morn; salute the rising sun, and fly to meet their dear companions,—their little relatives, in love and harmony.—Unhappy as *I* am, I have no guilt attached to me; not a human being have I injured—”

A sudden thought checked her tongue; she trembled, and lifted her tear-ful eyes to Heaven.

“ Father, supreme! thou knowest my *heart*,—*that* is guiltless! though my hands have committed murder! sudden, not premeditated, was the stroke! if I am criminal,—if I deserve punishment, let my fortitude, and submission to thy will, do away the remembrance of my crime in thy sight: painful retrospections will always embitter *my* hours, and well avenge the unhappy victim, who rushed upon his fate.”

Deeply

Deeply wounded by such reflections, she lay, until she heard the door unlock; the old woman came into the room, bringing with her the bundle of her own clothes, which her companions had taken care of; also some bread, milk, and fruits. The unfortunate girl had too much piety and good sense, to refuse the refreshments nature required; and she very gladly resumed her own habit, feeling most uncomfortable in the dress she had been compelled to assume. The woman was old, and harsh in her features and manners, yet seemed to relax a little from the natural severity of her looks when Adelaide spoke, though she could not comprehend her: the plaintive tone of her voice, and imploring eye, lost not their effect;—but, of what avail was pity, without power, or the possibility of understanding each other?

Adelaide had scarcely dressed herself before the men entered; the only one who spoke French, told her, that they should leave her in the care of the man and woman who

resided in the castle, who would regularly supply her with food, and sometimes go with her into the wood; but that she must never hope to go out of that castle without them.

“Tell me, I beseech you,” cried she, greatly agitated, “to whom I owe this confinement? who is it that I have offended so much, as to draw upon me a punishment so severe?”

“I am bound by vows,” replied he, to make no discovery; you will know all in time; I wish you well, but I can do you no service.”

He turned instantly from her, followed by her other travelling companion, and left her with the man and woman, who were to be her guards.

The former scouled at her under his dark bushy eye-brows, which, added to his tall figure and austere carriage, gave the poor prisoner but small hopes, that he would unbend

unbend in her favour.—He spoke a few words to the woman, and withdrew. She made some motions to Adelaide, as tending to invite her from that room; she readily followed, and was conducted round the gallery to another apartment, more light and pleasant, though much smaller: the windows were low; she had a view of the wood and of distant mountains; through a small glade that fronted the windows, she saw a clear sheet of water; the sun was just emerging from behind the distant hills, and glittered on its surface; not a breath of air disturbed the leafy foliage of the trees; a solemn stillness pervaded every part; and it appeared like an awful pause in nature, to convey a soft tranquillity to the inhabitants of the earth.

Adelaide felt undescribable emotions.

“How calm, yet how terrific,” thought she, “are the surrounding objects! What a peaceful serenity reigns over the animated world! Alas! it dwells not in my bosom!

This

This scene, which, to a tranquil mind, would have a thousand beauties, only adds horror to mine; for here, without a friend,—without a human being to converse with; here I seem doomed to vegetate,—useless to the world, and to myself.”

Tears gushed from her eyes; she turned from the window: the old woman was beside her; she looked pity, but that was all. The wainscot, and the furniture were broken and decayed; every thing was cheerless and desolate.

She rose, and traversed the room; then sunk into a train of painful ideas. The woman left her; the door was not fastened,—she walked out, and round the gallery, opening several doors;—every apartment bore the marks of desolation and ruin; she found the two rooms she inhabited were by far the best in that part of the house. She amused herself throughout the day in rambling over the old and decayed building; but, though
not

not absolutely followed, she was seldom five minutes without being crossed by the man or woman, who were always attentive to her motions, and every door in the lower apartments locked.

Another night and day were spent in this melancholy hopeless way; when, at the conclusion of the second evening, she heard a sort of unusual bustle, and the sound of several voices; her heart fluttered, and, for a moment, hope revisited her bosom; the door opened, and, to her utter astonishment, Donna Padilla advanced towards her. She could not suppress a faint exclamation. Padilla approached her with a smile, expressive of disdain and triumph.

Perhaps I am an unexpected visiter,—recover yourself, child; *you* are my guest; your reception and treatment here depends upon yourself."

"How, madam!" exclaimed Adelaide,
"is it to you, that I am indebted for the out-
rages

rages I have received? *you*, who have countenanced such arts of violence on my person? is it by your orders, that I am kept here as a prisoner?

“ Even so,” replied Donna Padilla, very coolly, seating herself; “ but you may break your prison bonds as soon as you please.—I have no time to trifle, therefore hear my terms, and listen to my resolves.—

“ Before you came to Estella, and, by your affected simplicity and artful management attracted the regards of Don Lopez, it was the earnest wishes of our mutual friends, that an union should take place between us. I had cause to value myself on his attentions.—I scruple not to avow my partiality for him; though I have much reason to question his judgment, when his heart could be seduced from me, by a young, uninformed girl, whose ignorance, artifice, and cunning, I know not which most to admire. However, the mortifying truth strikes forcibly upon me;—you have robbed me of his heart; but you shall never triumph in my disappointment.—You
arc

are either a prisoner for life, or you must resign every pretension to Don Lopez."

"I never had any pretensions to Don Lopez," replied Adelaide; "you might have spared me and yourself much fruitless trouble, had you been thus explicit before. Yet, I must say, such is my respect for his character, that I think a woman capable of such an act of violence, is very undeserving of his hand."

"Insolent creature!" cried Padilla, rising in a fury, "dare you insult me thus? you, a poor, unprotected wretch, subjected to my power—"

"Oh," said Adelaide, "how I blush for you;—poor and unprotected!—how strong are my claims upon a generous mind! and how debased must yours be, to take such an unjustifiable advantage of my situation."

The furious woman advanced, and struck her.

"Audacious

“Audacious wretch!” cried she, shall *you* upbraid and scorn me? know, I both can, and will be revenged;—tremble at the passion you have provoked.”

She flew out of the room, leaving Adelaide extremely terrified at her behaviour and manner. It was some minutes before she recovered from her fright, and considered on the consequences of this woman’s ungovernable rage.

“She may kill me!” said she, “what then, has life any charms for me? did not the deadly stroke, that destroyed my dear father, annihilate all my hopes on earth? I may turn my eyes around; all is desolate and hopeless. Isabella, and the governor, I flattered myself were friends; the former, but little known, perhaps repented of the kindness proffered to a stranger; and, had I accepted the hand of the latter, doubtless, this unprincipled woman would have sacrificed us both to her disappointed hopes.”

She

She was interrupted by the entrance of Donna Padilla, with the man, whom she called Anthony.

“Follow us!” said she.

Adelaide, appalled by the ferocity of her words, and the man’s looks, involuntarily shrunk back.

“If you do not obey me willingly, you shall be forced!” added she, advancing to her.

Without speaking, though not without trembling, Adelaide followed them across the gallery, through another apartment which opened into a smaller passage, at the furthest end of which was a door, up a few steps; this was opened; they entered, and she followed, but instantly turned.

“Stop,” said he, in a deep hoarse voice,
“this is your apartment.”

“Yes,”

"Yes," said Donna Padilla, with a malicious smile, "here you may contemplate at leisure on the respectable character of Don Lopez; his merits will brighten the gloom that reigns here."

Adelaide spoke not; her eyes wandered over the room; it was large and vaulted, lighted only by a small sky-light; the windows, which were very high, were closed up, and barred with heavy irons: a few decayed and broken forms, with the ruins of an altar-piece at the head of the room, shewed that in ancient times it had been used as a chapel: the wainscot was cracked and mouldering to pieces: the walls were discoloured and tumbling in various parts of the room: the voice, and even their footsteps, echoed as they moved; the whole was calculated to inspire horror and despair.

Donna Padilla silently permitted her to survey this dreary prison, enjoying the terror that crept over her countenance as she looked
on

on every object :—at length, “ You see your apartment ; I leave you to the full enjoyment of it ; to-morrow morning I shall pay you another visit.”

Not a word could Adelaide articulate ; she saw them depart and fasten the door, with a stupidity that bordered on insanity : her eyes were fixed for some moments without seeing objects ; for the very small light emitted through the sky-light from the moon, now that the lamps were gone, served only to give an imperfect view of the horrors and desolation that surrounded her. A cold shivering run through her veins, and roused her from the stupor that had first seized her.

“ Gracious heaven !” she exclaimed, “ what will become of me ? sure I am the most unhappy of all human beings !”

She seated herself on a broken form ; her trembling frame could scarce support the terrors of her mind ; she addressed herself
in

in fervent prayer, and felt a degree of resignation.

“ Whatever is to be my fate, I am under the protection of heaven; let me then arm myself with resolution, and a dependence on the Almighty.”

The moon began to decline; she could no longer distinguish objects: she had no bed, no resting place, but where she was already seated: it was impossible sleep should visit her eye-lids: she remained weary, fatigued and trembling, scarcely daring to breathe, from the echo that returned the slightest noise, and, by its hollow vibration, struck her with increased terror.

In this agitated state she remained, till a faint light illumined her dreary abode, and she perceived returning day; it was welcomed with rapture; for, though as little inclined to fear from supernatural causes as any of her sex, yet it was impossible a young and
timid

timid mind, overwhelmed with apprehension of expectant evil, could divest herself of that terror the gloom of such a place must naturally create. She felt a comparative load taken off her bosom, when she could discern the objects around her, though the light was feeble and in some places imperfect. She waited with trembling impatience for the coming of Donna Padilla: 'tis true, she had every thing to dread from her furious jealousy; but she wished to know the worst that could happen, whatever it might be.

After some hours of suspense, Padilla and her attendant entered the room; the latter with bread and water; he set it down and withdrew; her features wore an aspect of less rage and animosity than on the preceding evening. She seated herself, and seemed to be collecting herself to speak without passion.

“Adelaide,” said she, “you may judge from the steps that I have taken, that I am determined to carry my point; 'tis in your power

power to make me a friend, to secure to yourself a comfortable asylum for life, or, on the contrary, an implacable enemy, who will confine you in this castle, without a possibility of escape, or of your existence ever being known. Consider well on the alternative; you are friendless and unprovided for; I have heard you mention a Convent as a desirable retreat; such I will provide for you, and secure a sum of money for your pension and support. Can you desire more?"

"And what, madam, are the sacrifices I must make to obtain this situation?" asked Adelaide. "What is it you require?"

"To copy and sign this paper," answered she, "as a letter from yourself to the governor."

She took the paper, and, with some difficulty read what follows.

"A prior attachment, which I could not subdue, rendered me insensible to the honour you generously offered of your hand and heart.

heart. Particular reasons obliged me to adopt particular measures to forward my own plans. I shall see you no more, but I shall be interested in your happiness; and, if I dared, would recommend it to you, to seek it with Donna Padilla, who appears to be amiable and deserving: but of that you are the best judge. Adieu, sir, for ever, and accept of my thanks and good wishes.

ADELAIDE."

When she had perused the paper, she returned it to Donna Padilla, with a fixed and contemptuous look.

"If such is to be the price of my liberty, and the only means by which I can escape from your power, I reject the conditions with my whole heart. I will never set my name to a falsehood, much less recommend a woman you have taught me to despise."

'Tis impossible to give any adequate description of the fury that possessed this

raged woman; she uttered the most shocking execrations, and at length, drawing a poniard, vowed she would instantly deprive her of life if she did not obey her.

“Follow me,” cried she, “into another room; write what I shall dictate, or, by every Saint in heaven, I swear this day shall be the last of your existence.”

“Then it will be the termination of my misfortunes,” answered Adelaide, gathering courage from despair, yet keeping a watchful eye on her hand; “better to die innocent, than to exist with an upbraiding conscience.”

“Presuming wretch! die then,” cried the fury, making a stroke at her.

Adelaide caught her arm; they struggled; when, in that eventful moment, a sudden noise and voices were heard: the surprise threw Padilla off her guard, and Adelaide wrested the weapon from her; but, overcome by her exertions, terror, and suspense of the moment, she had just fallen back on her time-worn seat,

feat, when the door burst open, and the governor, with three men, entered the room.

A violent shriek from Donna Padilla, recalled the almost fleeting senses of Adelaide, who saw men enter, without knowing whether they were friends or enemies. An exclamation from the governor at the same time, made her turn her eyes and observe who it was. The transition from terror to extreme joy, was more than she could support; her senses fled, and she fell at his feet in the moment that he was going to support her.

While he raised her from the ground, and with the help of the water, intended for her beverage, restored her to life, Donna Padilla sat fixed like one petrified: the men guarded the door; she could not pass, and she saw herself detected, exposed, and despised. Desperate and furious she drew near them, and, before either could attend to her motions, she caught up the poniard, which

had fallen from Adelaide's hand, and, quick as lightning, stabbed her over the arm of the governor, and then wounded herself desperately. She fell, crying, "Now I am satisfied, now I am revenged."

The men ran to support her:—Don Lopez distractingly calling for assistance to Adelaide, who was far more terrified than hurt, for his arm had broken the force of the blow and the wound was not deep; but as that could not be known immediately, the governor was almost deprived of reason when he saw the blood issue from her bosom, and beheld her a second time lifeless in his arms.

All was confusion and uproar; the man and woman belonging to Donna Padilla, carried her into another room. Don Lopez sent off a messenger to Viana, about three miles from the castle, for a Surgeon. Adelaide was conveyed into the apartment she had first slept in; and in a short time, to the inexpressible joy of Don Lopez, she was restored

restored to her senses; the blood was staunch-
ed, and they had every cause to hope the
wound would prove of no dangerous ten-
dency.

Her preserver would not permit her to
speak till the Surgeon arrived; his anxiety
was truly distressing to the grateful girl; nor
was she unmindful of the wretched cause of
this distress:—she pointed to the door with
an expressive look, and uttered the name of
Padilla. He started at the sound, but com-
prehending her humane intention, “I will
hasten to inquire her fate, dearest Adelaide;
do not feel the smallest pain for an unworthy
woman, whatever has happened.”

He left the room for a moment, and met
the woman; from her he was informed “that
she was alive; but, whether in danger or not,
could not be known for the present.”

With this account he returned quickly to
Adelaide, and it seemed to give her pleasure.

The Surgeon very shortly made his appearance, and, to the unspeakable delight of the governor, he pronounced her wound to be of no consequence; it was not deep, and in the flesh only: when he had dressed it, he repaired to Donna Padilla, and found her in a much more doubtful state, though not absolutely dangerous; for, in the furious agitation of her spirits she had failed in both attempts.

The first question she asked was of Adelaide; as he had not been acquainted that she was the assassin, he readily repeated the same favourable opinion he had before given.

“How!” cried she, repulsing his offered assistance, “has she escaped my vengeance? Shall I fall a victim to gratify a low insignificant wretch? Shall she triumph?”

Here she fell into ravings little short of madness; and it was some time before the Surgeon could bring her to any degree of calmness, or that she would permit him to
examine

examine her wound: in her rage she discovered to him, that it was she who had made the desperate stroke against the lady and herself; and therefore he took an advantage of the discovery, by representing to her the ill consequences that must result from such an affair being made public: that, in all probability, her hurt was not more dangerous than Adelaide's, and that the recovery of both might cause the business to be hushed up.

After pausing for a moment, she requested to see Don Lopez: he followed the messenger with some trepidation, for he concluded she was dying. She was excessively agitated when he appeared.

"Forgive me, governor," said she; "I know not whether I am to live or die: forgive me therefore, and impute all my errors to a too warm affection, and a disappointed passion."

This address, accompanied by looks equally tender, disarmed his resentment.

“ I do most cordially forgive you,” said he, “ since the effects of your blind rage are not likely to prove fatal :—I hope also you will recover ; you may, if you please, deserve my future esteem and friendship, if a proper sense of your errors and ungovernable passions, produces a change in your disposition. I entreat you to permit all possible assistance for the preservation of your life :—the person you have most wronged, is truly anxious for your safety :—let this gentleman perform his duty, and all may yet be well.”

He retired, and, after some few entreaties and expostulations from the Surgeon, the desire of life (which can only be extinguished by frenzy and despair for a moment) returned as her passion abated, and she submitted to his skill. The wound she had given herself was deeper, and in a more critical part than Adelaide's, yet he apprehended no great danger,

danger, unless the turbulence of her emotions should bring on a fever, which he rather dreaded from a raised pulse and agitated spirits:—he candidly delivered his opinion, and told her every thing depended upon herself.

His report was heard by Adelaide with much satisfaction: though she had every thing to dread from a woman capable of such shocking attempts, yet the idea of her death she could not support, from feeling herself the cause that had driven her to desperation.

Not to dwell on this horrid subject, in the course of three days both ladies were pronounced out of danger, and Adelaide in a convalescent state, that transported the generous Governor beyond all bounds. He had paid a daily visit to Donna Padilla, at the request of her amiable rival:—she preserved her temper, which seemed mellowed into sober seriousness, not angry or resentful; and he treated her with a civility that greatly

pleased her, and which she acknowledged she had no claims to expect.

On the third day arrived a messenger from the Countess to Padilla; from the import of which, Adelaide, to her great astonishment, found that lady had been perfectly acquainted with, and accessory in the plot against her. Hitherto the governor had evaded giving her any information by what means he had traced her:—he now told her, “that, having many motives for suspecting the two ladies, he had condescended to take such steps to procure intelligence, as would, in any other case, have been mean and unwarrantable. Two servants were bribed to watch their motions; from one of Padilla’s he heard, the morning of that day she pretended to be too ill to see company, she had set off privately from Estella; but she had confided to no one the secret of her journey: he had therefore to send persons about to the several avenues of the city to learn her route:—he was at length successful, and that same night followed

followed her, unknown to any one. The different roads in the wood had puzzled him much, and occasioned great loss of time. Fortunately he met a peasant, who, on enquiry, told him, he was not far from an old castle, almost gone to decay, but where he might have rest for himself and his horses. It struck him instantly," he said, "that such a place was not unlikely to be the prison of Adelaide:—the idea hastened him on; he arrived and got entrance in that critical minute, when the life or death of this beloved object hung in the balance."

Donna Padilla had the messenger closetted with her some time; he was admitted to the side of her bed; she could not write, therefore only a verbal answer could be returned to the Countess, whose anxiety in not hearing from her associate, had caused her to send a man to the castle. The subject of their conference was not known; the messenger set off on his return, and the governor disdained to ask any questions.

The Surgeon assured him Adelaide might be removed without any apprehension of danger.—But where was she to go? If indeed she would accept of his hand, then he could conduct her in triumph to Estella, and have a legal right to protect her from her enemies:—but this he ought not in delicacy to urge, lest gratitude should induce her to make a sacrifice she might hereafter regret.

Such were the perplexing ideas that disturbed the repose of Don Lopez; the more forlorn and oppressed her situation was, the more his mind revolted against the appearance of fastening an obligation on her's, which might fetter it with a sense of favours she was unable to repay. His love and admiration increased hourly; but, convinced that he had not made any impression upon her heart, he endeavoured to restrain every appearance of fondness, under the respectful disinterestedness of friendship.

After

After weighing every circumstance attending this unfortunate young woman, he saw no plan she could adopt, but that of residing with his sister ; and he resolved out of hand to make the proposal.

On entering the apartment, he saw Adelaide resting her head on her hand, lost in thought ; her face pale, but inexpressibly interesting, from the soft langour that pervaded her features—when she raised her eyes to his with a look of gratitude and respect. After a little preliminary chat, he mentioned to her the Surgeon's opinion ; adding, “ I am truly anxious to have you removed from this castle and its owner ;—you may recollect two proposals I had the honour of making to you at our last conference in Estella ; can either of them deserve your attention ? or can you point out any more effectual mode of providing for your safety and future repose ? your happiness must constitute mine ; teach me then, lovely Adelaide, how to follow

low the lead of your wishes—and speak them without reserve.

Penetrated with gratitude, it was some moments before she could overcome her emotions, and venture to speak; at length she expressed the feelings of her heart with energy; acknowledged him to be her only friend and the preserver of her life;—that life she would most readily dedicate to the service of his sister, if that lady could be impressed with favourable sentiments for her, and allow her to cultivate her good opinion: “to have the power,” she added, “of proving her gratitude to the most worthy of mankind, and alleviating the sorrows of a respectable woman, was the only preferable choice she could have to an asylum in a convent.”

This answer was decisive against any faint hopes Don Lopez had indulged for himself; and he was too generous to permit any appearance of disappointment to be visible to her:

her:—on the contrary, he thanked her warmly for her compliment to his sister, and congratulated himself on the pleasure of bringing two such hearts acquainted with each other. He told her that he would send that evening to Viana for a carriage, to be with them the following day, and convey her immediately to Judella; near which the Countess De Gusman, his sister, resided.

“ She is already acquainted with you by name and character,” said he; “ for we are frequent correspondents, and have no reserves; consequently, you may be assured she will rejoice to see you.”

“ But,” said Adelaide, with some hesitation, “ will it not be proper that both Donna Padilla and the Countess should know where I am? Will they not otherwise injure my fame by the most odious suggestions, knowing I shall leave this house with you?”

“ And who is there, my charming friend,” asked he, “ whose opinion you are solicitous about? those women deserve not a moment’s consideration,

consideration, and, if they are ignorant of your situation, can form no plots against you. I cannot see the necessity for being anxious to be justified to persons so worthless."

"Pardon me sir," answered she, blushing. "I have been taught that the respect due to our own feelings, should make us desirous of leaving no doubtful character to the mercy of the malignant. My peculiarly unhappy situation subjects me to concealments that are very painful to an ingenuous mind; but I will not voluntarily add to unfavourable conjectures, even from an enemy; and perhaps when removed from Estella, no longer an object of jealousy or dislike, Donna Padilla will find it her own interest to be tender of my fame. - Suffer me then openly to reside with your sister, without leaving it to chance to discover where I am; for, where there seems an intended mystery, it generally implies something wrong."

"You must do as you please," returned the governor, "for 'tis impossible but you must be right in all your intentions: such
delicacy

delicacy and such prudence is uncommonly rare in persons so young. I will visit Donna Padilla this evening;—against my inclinations indeed; for, the more virtues I discover in you, the greater is my detestation of her character. But I will frankly acquaint her with our intended route, and the final annihilation of all my hopes.”

He rose with some emotion, and left the room.

Adelaide took herself to task for the coldness of her heart towards a man so truly amiable; but she felt such an invincible repugnance to the idea of being united to him for life, that she was convinced it would be a poor return for his love and generosity, to bestow a reluctant hand, with all the disagreeable circumstances that attended her. Consoled by this reflection, she was not perfectly easy when she thought of her introduction to the Countess Guzman; she was truly (what Donna Padilla and her friend had styled her in contempt) an adventurer without

out any vouchers for her character, any proofs to adduce for her veracity and integrity, but her own simple narrative; and, even in that, there was mystery and secrecy, such as, according to her own ideas, "implied something wrong." It was humiliating to appear under a veil of concealment to a lady she was taught to respect; and only an early prejudice she had imbibed against a monastic life, which she regarded as the very last resource, could have induced her to accept the governor's offer: of two evils she chose the least repugnant to her mind, though far from being pleasant to her feelings.

The indefatigable governor had procured the carriage, and every accommodation to prevent her from being fatigued or injured by its motion in their little journey. 'Tis in little minute things, which escape a common mind, that may be discerned the respect and affection of a delicate and attentive one. Adelaide was not insensible to such uncommon proofs of an attachment that did her so much honour;

honour; but she felt humbled by them, from a consciousness that she could make no return but cold expressions of gratitude; with which, however, he appeared to be extremely pleased, and well satisfied.

As they travelled very slowly, she took an occasion to ask him, in a pause of conversation, "What had passed in his last interview with Donna Padilla."

"I am ashamed to repeat," answered he, "the wild, impertinent and strange conduct of this woman. The affection, or rather passion (for the former is too mild a term for her feelings) she thought proper, in defiance of decorum, to express for me; the proposals she made were so extravagant, that only the situation her rash hand had thrown her into, could prevent me from openly avowing the scorn and detestation I held her in: as it was, I drew upon myself a torrent of reproaches."

"And what upon me?" asked Adelaide.

"Oh,"

“ Oh,” answered he, smiling, “ you did not escape her malignant tongue ; I was compelled to threaten her, in a very high tone, for the attempt upon your life, and with the detection of all her schemes, before I could silence her invectives : but she is unworthy of your notice,” added he. “ I shall only tell you, that, though the Surgeon thinks her perfectly free from any danger of death by her wound, he assured her, before me, that she must endeavour to tranquillize her mind, or she would bring on a fever that might prove fatal. At any rate she, may look forward to a fortnight’s confinement in the ruinous castle ; and I advised her to send for her dear friend the Countess to console her. This set her a raving ; and I took the liberty to leave her in the height of her passion, that she might grow cool at leisure.”

“ I cannot,” said Adelaide, “ entirely divest myself of apprehension, that I am marked out by the two ladies as an object of vengeance, though unconscious of deserving it ; and if so, no asylum will preserve me
from

from their machinations. But I will not anticipate evils;—tell me, my lord, of your respectable sister; how long since is it that she lost her lamented daughter?”

“ Daughter!” repeated the governor, “ she never was so happy as to have a daughter;—it was a son she lost some years ago, and that fatal event was attended by such melancholy circumstances, that her friends are particularly careful never to drop any expression that may tend to revive her remembrance, if indeed the sad idea is ever absent from her mind. She endeavours, however, not to obtrude her grief upon the very few persons she admits to see her; and the natural sweetness of her disposition prevents her temper from being soured by her misfortune, though it has lessened her cheerfulness. If, therefore, lovely Adelaide, you can reconcile yourself to retirement, and a very small circle, I am confident my sister will most gratefully study, by her best services, to render that retirement and her society, agreeable to you.”

“ Such

“Such a friend and companion,” replied Adelaide, “is the utmost stretch of my wishes, and I am impatient to be introduced.”

The horses, however, did not keep pace with her impatience, for the driver had his instructions to spare her from fatigue; and it was near the close of the day before they turned out of the road, and passed through a long and dark avenue of trees, near half a mile long; when, at a small distance, was seen the turrets of a castle rising above the trees, and a winding road brought them quickly to the gates. On ringing a large deep-sounding bell, they very soon found admittance; a servant was sent in to announce them, and at the entrance of a large hall they were met by the Marchioness De Guzman.

She advanced and embraced her young visiter: “A thousand welcomes, my amiable friend; my heart already challenges the title:—and you, my good brother, must instruct me how to deserve it.”

Adelaide

Adelaide was charmed with her kindness. How different was this reception from the cold forbidding air her former patroness had met her with. The Marchioness held her hand, and led her into a very noble saloon. "Once more," said she, seating her, "I congratulate myself on the acquisition of such a companion; 'tis an obligation I shall never forget, and constantly study to merit."

Some refreshments were brought in, and, before the domestics, the Marchioness addressed her brother on common subjects. During this time Adelaide had an opportunity of examining her new friend. She appeared to be about forty, not tall, nor very elegantly formed, yet perfectly easy and agreeable in her person: a mild placid air was diffused over her countenance: her smile irresistibly sweet; yet you might observe a sort of habitual melancholy that quickly succeeded the temporary smile of pleasure. The tones of her voice were inexpressibly touching, and the softness of her manners very attractive:

an

an expressive eye denoted good sense and feeling; without oppressing you by its keenness:—in short, her whole appearance was calculated to inspire affection and respect.

When the servants were withdrawn, she pressed the hand of Adelaide to her lips; “My amiable young friend, consider this house as your home; banish all reserve, and look upon me as a parent.—I fear you are not well,—the journey has fatigued you,—’tis a pretty long one—let my woman get your apartment ready.”

“By all means,” said the governor; “my lovely Adelaide, you must want rest.”

“I do indeed,” answered she; “for I feel extremely weak.”

This was sufficient for the Marchioness; all necessary accommodations were soon arranged: the governor mentioned the hurt she had received, though not the particulars; his sister, who had accustomed herself to assist her neighbours and domestics, chose to dress the

the

the wound herself, which appeared but trifling, and required no skill. She was soon placed in a comfortable bed, with the Countess's woman to stay by her.

That lady now returned to her brother, and from him heard all the late occurrences, and the whole of Adelaide's story, as far as had been communicated to him. She was astonished at the fortitude and peculiar situation of this amiable girl, and had too much generosity to suspect any thing unfavourable to her character from the mystery that enveloped her earlier days. She execrated the cruel women who had planned her destruction; and assured the governor, since he could not prevail upon her to become his wife, she would be a parent to her, and shield her from future misfortunes.

Charmed with his sister's goodness, Don Lopez made her suitable acknowledgments, and confessed, that having now procured her an asylum, he found it requisite to his peace

of mind to leave her almost immediately ; " Her presence," said he, " increases my affection, and adds to my regrets ; I cannot always command my feelings, and I see that my too-visible uneasiness gives her pain. I shall quit your castle therefore to-morrow, assured that in your society she will soon recover her spirits and health : she is a treasure, my dear Beatrice, that I commit to your best care."

The Countess was extremely attached to her worthy brother : she had not seen him for some time before, and heard of his intention to depart the next day with some concern ; but, convinced that he was right in the reasons he adduced, she refrained from expressing her wishes for his company, and only assured him of her attention to his deserving favourite.

Adelaide, from the comforts of a good bed, and a more composed mind, enjoyed the luxury of sleep for many hours, and awoke

in the morning so perfectly refreshed, that she was amazed at the alteration.

The Marchioness was soon at the side of her bed; linen and other necessities were provided for her; she assisted her woman in the little offices of dressing, and then conducted her to an adjoining room, where the governor waited to take his chocolate with her, and then to return to Estella.

Adelaide had too much sensibility and gratitude to see him depart, without feeling some emotion; and, perceiving very plainly his agitations on taking leave, she could not repress her tears.

“Farewell, my best, and at present, my only friend,” said she; “may heaven and its holy saints reward you for all your kindness to a poor unprotected orphan! while this heart beats, respect, affection and gratitude, will be its predominant feelings;—my prayers for your happiness will be daily offered to the

faints above; and the preserver of my life shall ever be the first object of my cares and wishes."

"Say not too much, dear Adelaide," cried he, kissing her hand, "your image, your kind expressions, are engraven on my heart: that heart is yours, and your happiness its chief concern." He turned from her to his sister, "Love each other, and do not forget me."

He quitted the apartment hastily; threw himself into the carriage, and ordered the driver to proceed at a great rate. The two ladies looked at each other in expressive silence: tears flowed down the cheeks of Adelaide; at length,—“Ah! madam,” said she, “how can I expect, or claim your friendship?”

“By your virtues, my sweet girl; the mind that can prefer a situation so unworthy of its merits, and reject rank and independence from principle, at least from a principle of delicacy which I cannot but applaud, demands,

mands, in my opinion, both admiration and esteem. However worthy my good brother is, if your heart speaks not in his favour, you do right to reject him: if you acted otherwise, I should think less of your delicacy and integrity than I now do."

“How good you are, my dear lady,” exclaimed Adelaide, kissing her hand; “you reassure my drooping spirits. All that I know of my own heart is devoted to Don Lopez; but it shrinks with disgust at the idea of marriage —”

“ Say no more,” returned the Marchioness; “ your hour is not yet come; when it does, heaven grant the selection of your heart may be justified by judgment and prudence. Mean-time, it shall be my care to remove from your mind the recollection of past misfortunes: the attentions you demand from me, will have the happiest effects on my mind, by changing the object which at present occupies it, and engaging it in new ideas, that must be productive of pleasure to myself.—Yes, my dear Adelaide, I look
H 3 upon

upon you as a blessing sent to me from heaven,—as a sweet companion to sooth my sorrows, to whom I shall owe the greatest of all obligations, peace and resignation.”

The grateful girl made the warmest returns to kindness so affecting; and in this pleasing reciprocity of sentiment we will leave them, and follow the governor.

Soon after his arrival at the castle, Don Felix came to his apartment, equally anxious and curious to know the cause of his absence, which he supposed was occasioned by some intelligence respecting Adelaide.

When Don Lopez had received the information that hastened him to pursue Padilla, he wrote a short note to his guest, apologizing for his sudden journey, and requesting he would remain as master of the castle till his return. Don Felix, much surprised, carried this note to the Countess; he observed

she changed colour, and strove, in vain, to repress her emotions;—they were visible.

“What is there in this to alarm you, my dear lady?”

“I fear,” answered she, trying to recover an air of indifference, “I fear this good and too credulous governor will be dupe to the artful contrivances of a worthless girl:—I have no doubt but he is gone in pursuit of Adelaide.”

“He would hardly be so romantic, I should think,” returned Don Felix; “and but last night was perfectly unacquainted with the route so strangely concealed.”

“I wish I may be mistaken,” said she, “for he is too worthy a man to be made a sacrifice of to duplicity and art: but you must allow, he is strangely infatuated by the ungrateful girl, and blind to all conviction.”

Don Felix made no reply; he was horridly vexed in the idea, that the governor had been more fortunate than himself in procuring

telligence. His intrigue with the Countess was the effect of concurring circumstances, and not an affair of the heart: she amused, and she gratified his vanity; but his inclination for Adelaide was as strong, if not more fervent, than ever; nor had he one moment relaxed in his secret endeavours to penetrate through the mystery that attended her sudden flight.

He hoped, if the Countess was concerned in the business, that in some fond, unguarded moment, he should obtain her confidence: but in this he deceived himself; that lady had been too much in the habits of intrigue, and too well versed in the plots and secret machinations of courts, to be thrown off her guard, or make any discoveries tending to her own disadvantage. From her therefore he gained nothing: all his blandishments had no other effect than to gratify her self-love.

“Donna Padilla,” she said, “continued very ill, and saw no company: she affected
to

to lament so charming a woman should be the victim of hopeless love, and accused the governor of insensibility and blindness, through the arts of the ungrateful girl she had unhappily brought with her to Estella. Before that period," she said, "he had certainly preferred Donna Padilla, and all their common friends had been taught to expect they would be united."

Though Don Felix did not implicitly believe all this, yet he did not hesitate to conclude, that Padilla was playing off the farce of sickness, with the hope of engaging the compassion and gratitude of Don Lopez: nor was he entirely divested of the suspicions caused by that gentleman, of both ladies being concerned in the scheme against Adelaide.

Most impatiently he bore the long absence of the governor; his vexation and suspense made him cool in his devoirs to the Countess; he was undetermined whether to quit Estella

in pursuit of the fugitive, or wait for the return of the master of the castle:—while balancing in his mind, to his infinite joy, he heard of his arrival; he flew to his apartment, that his doubts and suspicions might be realized, or done away.

The governor received him with great politeness, and made apologies for leaving him, by frankly explaining the cause. He told him, that, having information where Adelaide was confined, he had hastened to liberate her, which he had fortunately effected; and he had left her perfectly safe and happy, under the protection of his sister.

“But by whom was she spirited away?” asked the other, eagerly.

“That yet remains a secret,” replied the governor. “I found her in a remote and almost ruinous habitation: the wretches who had the care of her, could not speak French; and she, a stranger to our language, could not make herself understood. They fled at my approach;

approach; and I was too happy in finding her, to throw away my time after them. I again offered her my hand; she chose the protection of my sister.—I have no cause to complain; she has an undoubted right to choose for herself: with the Marchioness De Guzman, I am sure she will be safe and happy;—that certainly will make *me* so.”

“ You are the most fortunate, and disinterested of mankind,” cried Don Felix, in a tone of vexation, “ in serving the object of your affections; and being content with the consciousness of meriting a return, though the fair indifferent has no heart to bestow. For my part, I do not suspect her of insensibility, but of a prior attachment.”

“ It may be so,” answered the governor; “ I have no right to pry into any secrets, she wishes to retain.”

“ But surely,” returned the other, “ either you or she may guess from what quarter her persecutions proceeded.—Do you suspect the ladies had any concern in the business?”

Thus hard pressed,—“ I do,” replied he, “ more than suspect them; but time will develop all things: till then, knowing she is in safety, I shall reserve my conjectures to myself, and would advise you to do the same, if you can have any reserves to you charming Countess.”

Don Felix smiled, but made no reply to that observation.

“ Will you accompany me to this redoubtable Countess?”

“ Yes,” answered the governor; “ I wish to make my own conclusions, from the intelligence I shall communicate.”

When they were dressed, they speeded to the lady. She received them with her accustomed politeness, though not without blushing, and fluttering, as she observed to Don Lopez,—“ Your Lordship is a stranger, indeed!”

“ I am

"I am so, madam," he replied, "having been some days out of town, turning knight-errant, to deliver a distressed beauty from captivity."

"Indeed!" she cried, (her face and neck in a deep glow, and confusion working every muscle in her face;) may I ask who is the peerless lady, for whom you have undertaken this perilous adventure?"

"Doubtless, madam; since I come purposely to entitle myself to your ladyship's thanks, by informing you, that I have had the inexpressible pleasure to rescue your lovely young friend, Adelaide, from the hands of her ravishers; and to place her with my sister, the Marchioness De Guzman, who will, I am sure, treat her suitably to her merits."

The shame and confusion depicted in the countenance of the lady, beggars all description; she attempted to speak, but the words died on her tongue. The governor maliciously enjoyed her painful embarrassment. At length, after a long pause, he went on.—

"I found

“ I found the *Peerless lady*, as you justly call her, confined in a ruinous castle, with savages, who were strangers to her language; nor could she learn from them who were the authors of the insults offered to her.—Thank Heaven! I came in time to save her from the most imminent impending danger; and, as she was apprehensive that, with your ladyship, she could not be safe from the machinations of her enemies, my sister offered her an asylum, which she condescended to accept; and requested me to wait on you with the intelligence of her situation, having no doubt of your interest and anxiety for her safety.”

This equivocal account, and concluding compliment, gave the Countess time to rally her spirits; and, doubting whether her share in the black transaction had come to light, she affected a cheerfulness, foreign to her heart, and, in lively terms, congratulated the governor on his successful achievements; expressing much satisfaction at Adelaide's good fortune, in finding so warm a friend as
himself

himself, and a protectress so *obliging*, as the the Marchioness De Guzman: concluding an incoherent, ironical speech, with requesting to know, in what manner she should convey the *young lady's* clothes to her.

Don Lopez, who had his own reasons not to irritate her, or openly avow his knowledge of her duplicity, simply gave his sister's address, without making any comments on what she said. He did not mention Donna Padilla; nor did she; but Don Felix, who had been silently making his own observations, suddenly cried out,

“ My dear, Countess! you should hasten this good news to your friend, Donna Padilla; for I have no doubt but her illness originated from her concern for the fate of this young girl;—it commenced so soon after, that we cannot assign any *other cause*. The intelligence the governor has brought, will, I dare say, contribute to her recovery more speedily than all the efforts of the medical tribe.”

He

He uttered this with an air so natural, that the Countess, who eyed him attentively, was deceived, by his apparent candour.

"I shall take your advice," answered she; "and, if I am admitted, have the pleasure to make the desired communication."

A short desultory conversation took place after this, in which she mentioned her intention to leave Estella, the moment her *amiable friend* could travel, who had kindly promised to accompany her to Grenada.

The governor, disgusted with her duplicity, shortened his visit, by politely taking leave, without proposing any party, or offering his attendance as usual: he would not directly offend, or oblige her to throw off her mask, because he might still keep an eye upon her conduct: neither could he offer civilities to a character he detested.

Don

Don Felix chose to remain; which compliment was very gratifying to the Countess. She affected to burst into violent laughter, when Don Lopez quitted the room.

“What a ridiculous Don Furioso this is!” exclaimed she; “adopting the rage of Chivalry, to rescue forlorn damsels; to storm old castles, and carry off the captive lady, in triumph, to the chateau of his widowed sister!—a pretty romance, I vow;—what think you, Don Felix?”

“Oh, madam,” he replied, “the governor is a thorough Castilian; he is quite a hero in the cause of the ladies: castles, giants, forcerers, or lions, could not restrain the impetuosity of his desire to deliver the fair from captivity, and be the valiant knight to break her chains, and lay the trophies at her feet.”

The Countess was delighted with this fally, in her own style; and Don Felix, without encountering giants, had the happiness to enjoy her

her smiles, and entire approbation. But, alas! the lady had been too prodigal; and he, like the generality of ungrateful men, had been obliged, even to a surfeit. Adelaide had been the attraction that led him to the Countess: now she was no longer within his reach, but absolutely lost to him through her schemes, far from being an object of admiration, he really viewed her with disgust. But his active mind and intriguing spirit had suggested another plan, in which he hoped to make her a principal instrument; and therefore he had his own motives for keeping on good terms with her.

They laughed away an hour or two, and then separated—Don Felix to the governor, the Countess to her apartment; where, at liberty to indulge her chagrin and vexation, she summoned her faithful Mitrand, and acquainted her with Adelaide's situation. This woman, who had enjoyed but a partial confidence, and was entirely a stranger to the plan formed by the two ladies, expressed

sed her surprise at the governor's persevering gallantry; but the object of her jealousy being removed, and not likely to return and dispute with her the favour of her mistress, she was perfectly indifferent to any other advantages Adelaide might enjoy; and therefore only congratulated the Countess on being freed from "a vain, deceitful creature, who had the confidence to set herself up as her rival, and attract the admiration of all the gentlemen who visited her."

This was touching the right key, with the Countess;—confirmed her hatred to the innocent object of her envy, whom she rejoiced to get rid of; though she by no means wished her to have found a situation so eligible, as with the Marchioness De Guzman.

She was also extremely uneasy at not hearing from Donna Padilla; she was willing to flatter herself, that from the governor's silence respecting that lady, he might be unacquainted with her being the instrument of
Adelaide's

Adelaide's ill treatment; and supposed he had taken her from the castle before Padilla's arrival.

Agitated by hope and fear, she ordered Mittand to send Antoine to the governor's, and endeavour to learn, among the servants who had accompanied him in his late journey, and if possible, discover every particular that had passed between him and Adelaide.

Thus it always happens, that the improper indulgence of one irregular passion, leads the way to meanness and vice. The Countess had been early initiated into the school of levity, folly, and duplicity; an adept in every seductive appearance; and, blindly following the impulse of a depraved heart, she had plunged into innumerable errors; for some of which she had smarted severely, though not sufficiently, for near four years in confinement; but it had not altered the natural bias of her disposition; the moment she was free from restraint, old habits, and vicious

ous inclinations returned, and proved her incorrigible in vice, and the slave of her passions.

But every vice carries its punishment closely attached to it. Not one moment of ease can find its way into the bosom which harbours guilt, or meditates evil designs, against an unoffending fellow creature: self-reproach, anxiety, fear of detection, the piercing eye of suspicion, even an unintentional word, or glance, strikes to the conscious heart, and fills it with confusion and terror. The bold and confident may seek to deceive the world, but an inward monitor generally checks the assumption;—the eye falls under the search of truth, the tongue involuntarily falters, and the perturbed looks of guilt, are but thinly veiled under an affected laugh, or an apparent candor.

The Countess could not disguise her feelings, or deceive either the governor, or Don Felix; the pretended illness of Donna Padilla, which

which she was obliged to support, after having affirmed it; and the pleasure she sought to express by words, for the recovery of Adelaide, at once stamped her character with both gentlemen, and they knew how to appreciate every sentiment she uttered.

But this knowledge of her character differently affected them.—Don Lopez, who was a man of honour, despised and shunned her; Don Felix hoped, by management, to make her an associate in his own schemes, and turn her irregular passions to his advantage. Like minds will mingle, whether drawn together by virtue or vice; and he had little doubt, from certain circumstances that had passed, but that he should find an envious depraved woman ready to assist in humbling a rival, whose beauty and innocence were basilisks to her eyes, and to be revenged of whom, she would not scruple to sacrifice for a time her dearest interests. The event will prove he knew her perfectly.

The

The Countess had scarcely sent off her own servant to corrupt the governor's, and gain information, which she dreaded to hear, when she was completely relieved from the inquietude of suspense, by the arrival of the messenger she had sent to Padilla's castle; who had seen the governor, and who had learnt from old Anthony that lady's rash attempt upon the life of Adelaide.

Donna Padilla sent word of the unlucky termination of their well-concerted scheme, and requested she would leave Estella, and come to her.

What she felt at this intelligence can only be guessed at, by those unfortunate enough to have been in a similar situation;—who have experienced the detection of baseness and duplicity. A candid upright mind can have no idea of the shame and confusion that overwhelmed her, on recollecting what had passed at the meeting between her and the governor;

vernor; and the despicable point of view in which she must have appeared to him.

For some moments she was petrified; but, on recovering, she vented her rage and vexation in curses on herself, Donna Padilla, and above all, on Adelaide; whom she now hated worse than ever, as the cause of her disgrace, and on whom she vowed vengeance, in proportion to the evils she had brought upon her.

When the first tumults were over, and the violence of rage had expended itself, she sat down to consider what step she should pursue.—As to Donna Padilla, she no longer thought it necessary to keep terms with her; she was freed from the presence of Adelaide, and that was her first wish: the next was, to travel further into Spain, with Don Felix for her escort.

To visit an old castle, and listen to the ravings of a jealous disappointed woman, was
qui te

quite out of the question; and after various plans formed and given up, she determined upon sacrificing Donna Padilla to her own reputation, and to persist in maintaining her ignorance of that lady's schemes.

“ Whatever the governor may think,” said she, “ he will have too much politeness to contradict my assertions; I may impose upon Don Felix, and go from hence with confidence, and attended by a *shew* of respect at least.”

She immediately dispatched messengers to the castle, requesting a visit from the two gentlemen, and prepared to receive them with an air of satisfaction and surprise, as if she had unexpected intelligence to give them.

The gentlemen were at dinner,—not a very sociable tête-à-tête, for each were occasionally lost in a reverie. When the message was delivered, they started.—

“What has occasioned this summons?” cried the governor, “I feel no inclination to comply with it.—You will pardon me, Don Felix, for speaking slightly of your favourite, but she has so much consummate art, that I really detest her.”

“That is speaking very *slightly*! indeed,” returned the other, with a smile; “however, I do forgive you, on condition that you obey the mandate, which from a lady! you dare not refuse.”

Curiosity, not inclination, induced the governor to comply;—they quickly followed the messenger.

The Countess, notwithstanding her natural assurance, and the resolution she had assumed, felt a little abashed, when they asked her commands.

“’Tis to unfold to you a scene of dissimulation absolutely surprising,” answered she: “would you have believed that Donna Padilla,

Padilla,
crite
excl
men
whe
poor
wom
tend
had
vene
save
For
lope
dupl
trust
base
“
aske
trati
“
she;
chan
auth
idea

Padilla was capable of playing the hypocrite?—pretending a violent disorder, which excluded all company, when, at the very moment, she was travelling to an old castle, where it seems she had long confined *our poor Adelaide*! Yes, it was *she*, that jealous woman, who had her carried away, and intended the most violent outrages against her, had not your good genius, Governor, intervened, and your search proved successful, to save her from the rage of an irritated rival.—For my part, I am so astonished at this development,—so exceedingly surprised at the duplicity of Donna Padilla, that I can scarce trust the evidence of my senses.—Of what baseness is not such a woman capable?”

“ You have then heard from the lady?” asked Don Lopez, with a fixed, and penetrating look, that greatly disconcerted her.

“ Not immediately from her,” answered she; “ but I have my intelligence from a channel that admits not of doubt as to its authenticity: though you, I suppose, had no idea that Adelaide was a prisoner to Donna

Padilla? or that it was her castle from whence you took her to your sisters?"

"I had no certainty," he replied, "at the moment I entered the gates; subsequent events indeed perfectly satisfied me."

"Well," said she, hastily interrupting him, as if afraid he should say too much, "I have been exceedingly deceived by my Spanish friend, and no longer covet her for a companion in my travels. As to Adelaide, I look upon myself in some degree answerable for her safety; having rashly engaged myself to take care of her."

"Oh," cry'd the governor, interrupting her, in his turn, "do not, madam, feel any anxiety on account of that *rash* engagement; you are perfectly exonerated; she has now *chosen* the protection of my sister, who, being stationary, and living very retired, the young lady will not be thrown into hazardous situations, or likely to excite jealousy or envy. The very few associates of the Marchioness De Guzman are superior to such mean passions."

The

The Countess felt the full force of those words, but she chose to interpret them in the most favourable sense.

“ You are very kind, my lord, to ease my mind on this head; Adelaide cannot surely be in better hands; and I hope, by prudent conduct, she will make herself an interest in your sister’s favour; that she may remain with her till my return to Estella, when I shall be very ready to reclaim my charge.”

“ May I ask, madam,” said Don Felix, how soon you think to proceed on your journey?”

“ Within these three days, at farthest,” she replied; “ I have seen every thing worthy of observation here; and appear already to have trespassed on the politeness to which I am so much obliged.—Is it not true, governor? have I not taxed your civility so much beyond bounds, that you are compelled to recede from your first attentions?”

"I should be sorry, madam," answered he, "to incur such a severe charge from a lady; it is much my wish, and always my endeavour, to pay that respect and attention which merit and beauty demands from every man. If I have been deficient in your eyes, I am singularly unfortunate; and can only lament, that the disadvantage of some years has thrown me so much behind, in that gallantry and assiduity which marks my young friend here."

As the governor spoke the last words in a very expressive manner, the Countess would not urge the point. He very shortly took his leave, without a single remark on the conduct of Padilla; or further mention of Adelaide; and his silence very plainly implied, that he was much better acquainted with the whole business, than she chose to believe he was.

Stung to the soul by his indifference, and sarcastic answer, the moment he quitted her she

she vented her spleen by ridiculing his Spanish gravity, and absurd, romantic passion for Adelaide; whom she treated as an artful girl, that, by an appearance of generosity and self-denial in refusing his hand, only sought to heighten his passion, and make a merit of her compliance some time hence.

Don Felix, though perfectly convinced of the worthlessness of the Countess—of her envy and hatred to Adelaide; yet had not candor enough to believe, a young, unprotected, persecuted girl, would decline a situation, that must lift her into consequence, from principles of honour alone: some latent, unacknowledged motives, she dared not reveal, he thought, influenced her conduct; he entered not into her sentiments or character, but considered her, as a beautiful girl who apparently belonged to no one; and therefore was a fit object for a licentious passion.

This inhuman and ungenerous conclusion, so degrading to honour and feeling, governed

his determinations; and the known depravity and weakness of the Countess, afforded him hopes of finding in her a willing associate to humble the merits she both feared and hated. Under this idea, he coincided with her opinions; joined in her ridicule, and spoke most contemptuously of Adelaide; and proposed to her, by way of mortifying the governor, that they should stop at Judella, and pay a visit to the Marchioness De Guzman, without mentioning their intention to him. "Politeness," added he, "will not permit her to decline seeing you; and 'tis impossible the girl can make any objections."

Without entering into his motives for this proposal, the Countess acquiesced in it at once; and the day after the next was fixed on for beginning their tour. Delighted with having fixed him in her train, she attended not to the impropriety of being escorted by a young officer, without a female companion; she sought only her own gratification,

—to the opinion of others she was perfectly indifferent.

The governor, thoroughly disgusted by her sentiments and duplicity, felt not a little pleased to hear of her intended departure, that he might be relieved from paying an external politeness that is heart disavowed; and, assured that she must see he understood her character, hoped she would never think of returning to Estella, since she had thrown all the odium of the late transactions upon Donna Padilla; and could never face that lady, if indeed, *she* ever ventured to come back again, which he much doubted.

Under these different impressions we shall leave the parties, to look back on Adelaide, and her new friend.

After the governor had left them, the morning being fine, the Marchioness led her guest into the most delightful garden she ever beheld; a beautiful and extensive shrub-
bery

bery was at the bottom, intersected by a clear winding rivulet; at the sides of which, the citron and orange trees, in full flower, threw out the most delicious perfume; and, with the fragrance of other odoriferous shrubs, scented the air with inconceivable sweetness: a rising wood, at the back of the shrubbery, where the birds were in full song, and by their melody added to the beauty of the scene, altogether enchanted the senses of Adelaide.—She exclaimed,

“What a heavenly place! This is indeed an elysium for the good and happy mortals who have their residence here.”

“Ah! my young friend,” said the Marchioness, “happiness is not local; situation has little to do with it, ’tis dependent on the mind, and that perhaps may wander far from this favourite spot.”

“Most true,” replied, Adelaide, with a look of tender concern, and a sigh of recollection, “objects more animated must delight a rational soul; but, my dear madam,
the

the beauties of nature instruct us to adore the goodness of a bountiful Creator; and whatever he decrees must be all-wise and just! however repugnant to our wishes, and painful to our feelings."

"So young a philosopher!" cried the Marchioness, "Either you have an uncommon degree of fortitude, or, what I cannot believe, a very small share of sensibility."

"I cannot boast of the first, and am but too sure, that insensibility forms no part of my character," returned Adelaide; "but a long habitude to sorrow has almost annihilated hope; disappointments and affliction have marked my days, and a humble submission to my fate is the only lesson that is left for me to practice."

"We will change the subject, if you please," said the Marchioness, "and turn to the beauties you advise; perhaps you will scarcely believe, that this really sweet retirement was so entirely neglected for many years, that I found it a wilderness, choaked up with weeds; and the castle itself so out of repair,
so

so cheerless and uninhabitable, that I had much difficulty to prevail on my domestics to reside with me in one part, (formerly tenanted by two old venerable servants, and the only habitable part of the mansion) while the other apartments were repairing.

“ They endeavoured to shake my resolution, by stories of ghosts and haunted rooms; but, finding me proof against all their terrific tales, some of them left me; and only three old servants ventured to brave all the horrors of the place, and abide by their mistress. I wanted amusement for my mind, and employment for my hours; I therefore sent for workmen, superintended every thing myself, and, in much less time than can be conceived, cleared away all the weeds and rubbish; repaired, and restored every place to its pristine beauty;—nor have any uncivil ghosts ever impeded my designs.

“ ’Tis now above three months since I finished my improvements out-doors; and two, since I completed all my alterations within. No sooner was my mind unem-

ployed by plans, and my hours, which used to be engaged in directing workmen, devoted to reading or needle work, then I found all the sorrows, which I had suspended by activity, and a diversity of ideas, return with their full force on my heart; I could no longer derive pleasure from the completion of my plans, nor tranquillity from the beauties I had newly created. The visits of my few neighbours have long been irksome, and I was sinking fast into a gradual melancholy, that undermined my constitution, and destroyed my spirits."

"My brother's letters were the only consolation I could admit; but I steadily refused all his entreaties to quit this retirement, and reside with him. Solitude was my choice, and I grew every day more devoted to that, and the indulgence of grief. Such was the state of my mind, when my brother informed me two ladies were arrived at Estella, for whom he felt much interest.

"Not a circumstance relative to you did he leave me unacquainted with; perhaps he
was

was more unreserved in his sentiments to me on certain subjects, then you are aware of; be that as it may, I feel myself uncommonly interested for you. The singularity of your situation greatly affected me, and engaged my attention. I was pleased with his attachment to you; and the impatience that took hold of me, to know how the affair between you would terminate, gave a new turn to my thoughts, and carried me out of myself.

“ The several letters I received from him gave me alternate pain and pleasure; until the last, which describe his distraction on losing you; *that* filled me with unspeakable concern. Thanks to the holy Virgin, he has released you from your persecutors: and now, my sweet friend, I think happiness appears to be within your reach; at least, if not happiness, peace and tranquillity may be yours, for you must be either my sister or my daughter:—the election shall be in your own power, and we will talk of that at some future period.”

Here

Here the Marchioness stopped. Adelaide kissed her hand, with an impassioned expression of gratitude.

“Your goodness, madam, overpowers me; language cannot express my feelings: may my actions speak for me, and prove my sensibility. It is long since I have known the words of tenderness, so impressive on the heart: from the Countess I received none, her words, her looks, and manners, were repulsive to love and confidence; but with you, methinks I could deposit every secret of my soul.”

“You flatter me most agreeably, my dear girl, in telling me so, but I must *deserve* your confidence, before I will receive it. The pleasure I now enjoy, is a striking proof how little weak mortals are capable of judging what situations or incidents are most calculated to promote their happiness. The Marquis was, some years back, appointed ambassador to the Court of France; a sister of my mother’s had married in that country.

I was

I was not displeased, therefore, with the opportunity that offered, of recognizing some of my relations, though I had held no correspondence with them;—brought up from my childhood in a convent, I was taken out to be married, only six months before I lost my mother.

“ I had not been in the habit of conversing with any person, but those of my own nation, and found the public situation I was placed in at the court of Francis extremely awkward, from the ignorance of my language. Necessity obliged me to acquire it; I found it very unpleasant, and very tedious to study. I persevered however, and became a tolerable proficient; though I regretted the time so employed; and subsequent events, in the years we continued there, a thousand times occasioned me to wish I had never seen the French court, and that myself, and those I loved, had still been strangers to the language.

“ Yet *now* I derive inexpressible delight from that circumstance, since otherwise I should

should not be capable of enjoying the pleasure of your society; and the evils I lament most probably might have annoyed my peace in some other shape, had I never quitted Spain."

An air of melancholy seemed to steal over the features of the Marchioness, as she pronounced the last words, which not being unobserved by Adelaide, she changed the conversation, by talking of Donna Padilla; and generously regretted that a woman, so gifted by nature and fortune, should, by the violence of her passions, be a reproach to her sex, contemptible in the eyes of those whose esteem she was desirous of obtaining, and hateful to herself, if capable of any feeling.

"Your observations are just," replied the Marchioness; "the blameable indulgence of one bad passion, leads to a thousand shameful irregularities; and renders it extremely difficult to pull in the reigns of vice and folly, and recover the paths of rectitude.—But come, my dear Adelaide, we grow too serious; both

of us need amusement; I will order the carriage, and we shall have a delightful airing, to diversify our ideas, and give them a more lively complexion."

The other readily assented: they had a pleasant ride, and returned with additional spirits. In this pleasing, and equally improving manner, they passed several days in tranquillity; during which, they heard from the governor of what had passed between him and the Countess, whose duplicity they detested; and Adelaide congratulated herself a thousand times on her escape from such a companion.

One day, the ladies were in a room which opened into the garden, sitting at work, and inhaling the sweets that proceeded from a quantity of beautiful shrubs around them, when a servant entered, and told his lady, there were visitors at the gate, in a carriage, attended by servants, who, on being informed the Marchioness was at home, seemed to be alighting without

without ceremony, though they were perfect strangers to him.

“ Who can they be?” cried she, rising hastily.

Adelaide’s heart beat quick, though she knew not why; when, in a moment, another servant came in, and announced the Countess le Marr, and Don Felix.

Surprise entirely overcame both ladies; and the visitors entered before they had recovered themselves. The Countess advanced with all the freedom imaginable.

“ You will pardon this intrusion, madam.”

She stopped abruptly; the eyes of both ladies were instantly fixed on each other, and both, in the same moment, exclaimed.—

“ The Countess D’Offuna! the Baroness D’Foulanges!”

“ Yes,

"Yes, madam," said the Marchioness, first recovering from her mutual surprise, D'Offuna *was* my name, when I resided in the French court; your name, I presume, has been changed also."

"By a second husband, who is also dead. The Baron D'Foulanges I believe died soon after you left our court."

"The Marchioness, who was still standing, and seemed not inclined to treat her guest with much politeness, was about to reply, when two or three convulsive sighs reached her ears, and Adelaide fell senseless by her side. Excessively alarmed, she called for instant help; and, turning to the Countess,

"You see, madam, the disorder your presence has occasioned, and you *must know*, how very unwelcome you are to me."

She assisted Don Felix, (who had flown to raise Adelaide, forgetful in that moment of the mask he had assumed) and the servants,

to

restore the unfortunate girl to her senses; while the Countess stood with a look of mingled vexation and haughtiness, the silent witness of the tender regards shewn to Adelaide, who began to give signs of returning life. Don Felix recovered his prudence, as she did her senses, and returned to the Countess, with an expressive shrug of his shoulders.

Mean-time Adelaide had opened her eyes, and they fell on the Countess;—she hid her face in the bosom of her friend.

“ Hide me! cover me up!” cried she, “ take me from a sight, that will cause instant distraction!”

Her emotions were so violent, that the Marchioness had her conveyed from the room, herself attending, regardless of the others.

“ What does all this mean?” cried Don Felix, “ we are treated here very uncere-
moniously;—why is this girl so strangely
affected?”

affected? or why does the lady of the house behave so rudely?"

"You ask so many question in a breath," answered she, pettishly, "that it requires more than one tongue to answer you. The airs this impertinent girl gives herself I do not comprehend; they originate from affectation, I believe. As to the lady of the mansion, I have stumbled on an old acquaintance, which both parties would have gladly avoided. The change of names must account for my not recognizing the Countess D'Offuna, in the Marchioness De Guzman.—We cut a mighty absurd appearance here, I think."—

That moment the Marchioness entered the room, with an air equally solemn and disdainful.

"I feel, madam," said she, "some reluctance, in my own house, to be under the necessity of speaking disagreeable truths; you must be conscious that your presence here is an *insult to me*, and therefore cannot wonder,

der, if I wave all ceremony, and give orders for your carriage. I am extremely sorry, Seigneur, that, as a companion to this lady —”

“ Stop, madam!” cried the Countess, interrupting her, in a voice choaked with passion, “ stop! nor presume thus to *insult me and my friend*.—If you had a ridiculous foolish dupe for your son, the fault lay between nature and you. I made him not what he was; and did him but too much honour in permitting his visits; *that* is the whole amount of your charges against me. I come here to claim Adelaide, committed to my care by her preserver and protector; nor can I resign the trust into other hands; neither can she remain here without my permission.”

“ A strange claim, indeed!” replied the Marchioness, with a look of infinite contempt, “ and is as unadvised and fruitless, as strange: be satisfied, however, madam, in the assurance, that this young lady remains here, under my protection, a voluntary choice; that *you* will see her no more; nor; unless you assert rights to substantiate your claim, will I ever resign
her

her into your power. She is free to chuse for herself; and being perfectly acquainted with the share you had, in common with Donna Padilla, in the ill treatment she has so recently experienced, you cannot be surpris'd at the effects your arrival has produced.—In short, madam, *she* renounces your protection; and I must desire you to leave my house instantly.”

Overcome with rage, disappointment, and every furious passion, the Countess descended to language very unbecoming in females: so inselently abusive were her invectives, that the Marchioness rung the bell, and, on the entrance of the servant, ordered him “to attend that lady to her carriage.”

Don Felix, who had stood a very awkward witness of this scene, saw it was in vain to contend, or hope for any present success to his schemes; taking the Countess by the hand,

“Let



“ Let us go, madam; let us leave this inhospitable lady to repent at leisure of her delusion, and suffer the consequences of her credulity, in being imposed upon by an artful girl.”

Incapable of speaking distinctly, from the violence of her agitations, she flounced out of the room, muttering vows of vengeance upon poor Adelaid, and her kind protectress.

No sooner were they gone, than the Marchioness returned to her young friend, very greatly agitated.

“ Indignation and contempt,” said she, “ supported my spirits while in the presence of that woman; but painful remembrances crowd thick upon my heart, and overwhelm me with sorrow. Little did I conceive the Countess Le Marr could be that infamous Baroness De Foulanges, the original cause of all my misery.”

“ And mine !” cried Adelaide: detestable woman! horrid name, that strikes terror to my heart! No wonder that heart always held back, repulsive, when I wished to feel affection and gratitude! Oh! ’twas instinct taught me to shrink from that cruel woman.”

“ How, my dear Adelaide,” said the Marchioness, “ did you know any thing of her by her former name ?”

“ Not personally, madam; but, too well I know she has been my bitterest enemy; and, in a great degree, the destroyer of my parents.”

“ Indeed !” returned she: “ You have raised my curiosity, I confess; but I can believe any thing of that woman—the favourite of Louisa, the queen mother, whose passions and gallantries knew no bounds; every kind of shameful intrigue was practised between them.

“ I heard a few years ago that she was in disgrace with her royal mistress; but I never made any enquiries whether she was restored to her favour before her death.”

"Whose death?" asked Adelaide, hastily.

"The queen-mother of France, the Countess of Angoulesme."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Adelaide, starting up; "is *she* dead? Ah! why did not this welcome intelligence reach the ears of my dearest father, before that fatal hour which he rambled from our cottage, and drew on us misery and death! Oh! my dear, dear father, one of your enemies is no more:—but, alas! you are gone for ever from the wretched Adelaide."

A violent burst of sorrow stopped her voice; and the Marchioness was obliged to repress her own grief, and administer help and comfort to the afflicted girl. When restored to some degree of calmness, she kissed the kind hand that supported her.

"Dear madam," said she, all obligations to secrecy are now at an end; no longer will I appear in a doubtful character; you shall know all my melancholy story, when I

have acquired spirits for the relation. My memory is but too faithful for the task; for, though very young, and incapable of knowing all the events that happened, yet I have too often heard the particulars from my beloved father, not to have them deeply engraven on my heart. Ah! how often has that heart bled at the shocking relation, and at this moment trembles with horror."

"Recover yourself, my dear child," said the Marchioness, tenderly, "you are too greatly agitated now to enter upon painful subjects: however anxious I am to hear your story, I wish you to defer it, and by rest and quiet; acquire more tranquil spirits. You have no more to fear from the Countess; you are my adopted child, and already dear to my heart. I leave you, my dear Adelaide, to rest; I must retire for a short time; my feelings are little less painful than your own; I wish to be alone, that I may endeavour to subdue them, and meet you again with more composure."

She

She withdrew to her apartment, leaving her woman with Adelaide, whose mind was so distracted with past retrospections, that she found it impossible to rest.

“What a good lady is your’s,” said she to Maria, the woman, “how happy is every one that lives under her protection!”

This Maria had resided in France with her lady, therefore spoke the language tolerably.

“True, madam,” answered she, “we should be all very happy if we could see our dear lady so; I am sure we daily pray to the Holy Virgin to heal her afflictions.”

“The loss of an only son must indeed be a heavy one;” said Adelaide, “Pray how long is it since he died?”

“Died!” repeated the woman, “we know not that he is dead; a certainty of that, however it might wound a mother’s feelings, would be comparative ease to the constant

anxiety and dreadful suspense my poor lady suffers. But pardon me, Mademoiselle, I have said too much; since I find the Marchioness has been silent, pray let my imprudence be forgotten."

Adelaide assured her the few words she had uttered should remain unnoticed in her bosom, and immediately prepared to seek that repose so essential to tranquilize her own agitated spirits. But sleep would not deign to visit her; a thousand painful retrospections crowded upon her mind, and the task she had engaged for to her friend, obliged her to recal to her memory such terrible events as effectually precluded rest, and tended but little to lessen her emotions.

To find in the woman who had so cruelly deceived her, the determined enemy of her parents, from whom originated all the misfortunes of her life, shocked her to the very soul, and proved, beyond a doubt, the depravity and baseness of that heart which could
still

still continue in wickedness, without any compunction for the miseries, ruin and death, she had brought upon a noble and innocent family.

She lay some hours on the bed, and, only for the heavy sighs that now and then issued from her bosom, might have been thought to sleep: but Maria saw the perturbation of her spirits, and silently pitied what she could not remove.

The Marchioness at length entered the room; her attendant quitted it. Adelaide rose from her bed, and turned to look on her friend; their eyes met, and rendered all questions unnecessary: a deep melancholy clouded the features; a heavy langour dimmed the lustre of their eyes, and bespoke the mind but ill at ease.

“ Dear Adelaide,” said the sympathising lady, “ I fear you have not obtained that repose I wished you.”

K 4

“ I am,

"I am, however, a little refreshed," answered she, "though I have not slept, and, if you please, will attend you to the saloon."

After sitting some time, and partaking of the refreshments considerably ordered for her, Adelaide, kissing the hand of her benefactress, said, "I am impatient to lay my heart open before you, to unveil the mystery that has hung over me, and prove myself not unworthy of your generous protection.—Painful as the recital must be, yet the secrecy I have hitherto observed has laid heavy upon my mind, because it subjected me to unfavourable conjectures I was not at liberty to remove."

"Take your own time, my dear girl," replied the Marchioness; "so perfectly convinced am I, that misfortunes, not errors, have clouded your early days, that nothing you will tell me can increase my respect and esteem for you, though it may raise my pity and admiration."

"Oh,"

“ Oh,” cried Adelaide, “ what liberality and confidence ! there are but few such hearts as your’s : may I ever deserve and possess that much-valued esteem ! The story I have to unfold will be too prolix for me to relate, or you to hear ; and indeed requires recollection, though deeply imprinted on my heart and memory, by the constant repetition made by my dear father, and the perusal of his memorandums. I will therefore, if you please, endeavour to commit the melancholy relation to paper ; it will be less painful to myself ; you may then read it, and lay it aside when you are satisfied, at pleasure.”

“ Do so, my sweet friend,” replied the Marchioness, “ whenever you find leisure or inclination to make the effort, which must be a very painful one to a heart of sensibility like your’s.—At present think only of recovering your spirits.”

She made suitable returns to this kindness ; but was so impatient to entitle herself to the voluntary esteem of her friends, that she

seized every moment to employ her pen in the afflicting task she had undertaken. It was indeed a dreadful one, and drew torrents of tears from her eyes; but she persevered, and in two days completed, and delivered the following manuscript to her benefactress.

THE MEMOIR OF ADELAIDE.

“ My father was descended from a very ancient and honourable family; his title the Count D’Beauvais.” Good heavens! exclaimed the Marchioness. “ He was generally allowed to be the handsomest man that graced the court, when Francis took possession of the throne, though at that time not much above eighteen. Before he was twenty, he married Adelaide, niece to the Count De Noailles, whose birth and beauty were the only public claims she had to admiration, and no doubt were the first attractions with a young and handsome man; but he soon found those advantages were but secondary ones to the charms of her temper, the brilliancy of her
her

her understanding, and the goodness of her heart. He had judgment enough to distinguish and admire her mental accomplishments, and fortune being no object with him, they were united by the ties of affection, and the general approbation of their friends."

"Perhaps, madam, the character of Francis, and the intrigues of his court, are perfectly known to you. My father always did him justice: he described him as amiable in manners, bounteous in disposition, eloquent and sensible—yet ambitious and courageous to excess. He doated on his mother, Louisa, the Countess of Angoulesme, whose unbounded influence over him occasioned all his excesses.

"She was beautiful and witty; much personal courage; and deeply versed in all the political arts of courts; an uncommon share of magnanimity and penetration, but impetuous in her passions; vain to excess; very susceptible of love; jealous; impatient of

controul, and ever implacable in her resentments. Such I have often heard my dear father repeat, were the characters of those persons who governed the kingdom of France, and who were equally beloved and revered when Francis first ascended the throne.

“ The tournaments and entertainments made on that occasion, first brought my father to court. He was early distinguished by the favour of his sovereign, and the queen Claude, whose sweetness of temper made her generally beloved; though the Countess of Chateau-Briant was the favourite mistress of the King; and report failed not to insinuate, that Admiral Bonivent was equally happy in the good graces of Louisa.

“ Francis, young and ambitious, determined to conquer Milan. I cannot enter into the history of the war: my father accompanied his royal master. They encamped within a league of the city, where an obstinate and bloody battle was fought. During the conflict,

conflict, the King, who rushed every where with intrepidity in the midst of danger, had his horse killed under him; another moment would have seen him trampled to death. My father saw the imminent danger; leaped from his horse; preserved his master, and exposed himself to a host of foes.

“ The King sprung upon the animal and charged them bravely; providentially a large party of his friends galloped up in the critical minute, to save the lives of both, though both were wounded. Night came on, and the battle was suspended. Francis embraced my father, and called him the preserver of his life: as such he introduced him to his surrounding friends, and vowed eternal gratitude.

“ At the conclusion of the war, after the surrender of Milan, the King returned to France, and presented the Count De Beauvais in such flattering terms to the Queen and his mother, as could not fail of being highly gratifying

gratifying to him, and raised no small share of envy in the bosom of the then reigning favourite, Admiral Bonivet.

“ My father went into the country, to enjoy, in the bosom of his friends, his well earned reputation; and there, on a visit, he first saw my mother. Hearts, like theirs, were not long in assimilating, and they were united with the warmest approbation of their friends.

“ For five years they enjoyed the sweets of domestic life, nor could any allurements draw them to the court. During this blissful period I was born; but my mother suffered so much by the event, that it was very long before her health was restored, so as to give hopes of a perfect recovery to her fond husband and beloved friends; whose anxiety was scarcely removed, when my father received an order to attend the King on another warlike expedition.

This

“ This was a severe blow to both, but it could neither be evaded or disobeyed ; and, after a severe conflict between tenderness and duty, my father repaired to court.

“ I pass over near four years that were spent in different expeditions ; during which time my parents had never seen each other but twice, and that very transiently ; but the tenderest affection reigned in both their hearts.

“ It was at this period that the King of England was invited over to France, and the two monarchs met in the plain near Calais. With much delight I have heard my father describe the grandeur and splendid magnificence displayed by both nations at this interview ; but that is unnecessary for me to repeat now ; titles, tournaments, and every specious of show and gallantry, took up all attentions.

“ It

“ It was at one of those tournaments that the Count De Beauvais was allowed to excel and carry off the prize with such distinguished eclat, that, from that hour, he captivated the hearts of the King’s mother, Louisa, and her then chief favourite, the Baroness De Foulanges; from both he received such unbounded applause, and marks of high favour, that it confounded, rather than gratified him; and, when the interview was at an end, and the gay monarchs returned to their capital, my father asked permission to repair also to the bosom of his family.

“ Unfortunately, Louisa entered at the moment he had made the request; and instantly opposed it. Before the King could reply, she exclaimed,

“ How, Count! do you think of leaving us? we cannot consent to lose the ornament of our court, the preserver of our sovereign, and the favourite of the ladies:—no, sir,” said she, addressing Francis, “ rather request
the

the Count's family to visit the court: we cannot do them too much honour: besides, from the reputation of the Countess of Beauvais's beauty and accomplishments, she will add lustre to the brilliancy of your circle."

"This last insidious observation carried her point; she knew the susceptibility of the King, and his ambition to have beautiful women at his court: she hated the reigning favourite, the Countess of Chateau Briant, whose influence she dreaded would counteract her own; therefore, actuated by a double motive, she was resolved to prevent my father from retiring into the country.

"She succeeded; Francis requested in a manner that, however affectionate in appearance, amounted to a command, that the Countess De Beauvais should repair to court,

"My father was obliged to comply with an order truly repugnant to his inclinations; nor was the intimation of the King's pleasure attended

attended with less pain to my mother. Without ambition, love of pleasure, or any vanity to gratify, she preferred the sweets of domestic retirement with a chosen circle of friends, and the delightful employment of maternal cares, to all the splendour of a court she had never seen, and was taught to believe, abounded in licentiousness, duplicity and envy.

“Extremely concerned therefore at the necessity which demanded her attendance, not even the transporting idea of seeing a beloved husband could lessen the reluctance, or abate that foreboding sorrow which seized on her heart, at the moment she took leave of her surrounding friends; and these feelings accompanied her throughout her journey to the capital.

“I pass over the meeting of two affectionate hearts, and the caresses my father bestowed on their little darling, Adelaide. I was then turned of seven years old; and, having experienced the whole attention of a most accomplished and tender parent, at that early

early age I was much better informed than some children of ten or twelve ; consequently my father was delighted with my little improvements, and for some days their mutual transports at meeting, precluded every regret for the time and place.

“ Near a week was given to love and confidence, after so long an absence : and, though my father had daily paid his duty to the King, he had contented himself with inquiries after my mother, without commanding her presence, and she was determined not voluntarily to attend.

“ One morning a billet was put into his hand, as he was going to the King’s closet, by a man who instantly disappeared. He opened it in some surprise : the contents were these ; “ Why are you wilfully blind ? the most brilliant fate awaits you ; lift your eyes to the most elevated situation, you will read love and tenderness :—you may command power and fortune.”

“ Astonishment

" Astonishment and indignation were his first emotions:—curiosity, and a desire of mortifying, his second. He had no doubt but the billet came from the favourite, the Baronesse de Foulanges: he had remarked her glances, and more than once had been addressed by some equivocal expressions, that he chose not to interpret in the sense they were intended to convey. He was therefore vexed at this open avowal of her sentiments, and saw at once the slippery ground on which he trod—her power being unlimited with Louisa, and no enemy so dangerous as a disappointed woman.

" The Countess of Angoulesme was with the King when he entered the closet, overwhelmed with chagrin; the traces were so visible on his countenance, that his Majesty exclaimed,

" Are you ill, Count?"

" No, sire," he replied; and, turning to make his devoirs to Louisa, he encountered
such

such a look, that his words faltered on his tongue.

“Heaven forbid,” said she, with energy, “that our beloved friend should ail any thing! the man whom “love and fortune” favours, should be superior to the infirmities of nature.”

“Those words, and the looks that directed them to the heart, at once convinced my father he had mistaken the writer of the billet, and that he was still more unfortunate than he had thought himself.

“Before he could recover from his confusion, the King added,

“Well remembered, Count; when are we to be favoured with the presence of the Countess? Do you not know I am impatient to see her?”

“My father replied, with some hesitation, that she would very soon pay her duty at court;

court; but, that having lived so long in retirement, some preparations were necessary; also some information on etiquette, with which she was totally unacquainted. The King requested he might not long be deprived of so great an ornament to his court, as he expected to meet in the Countess De Beauvais.

“ Then turning to another gentleman, who had just entered, Louisa drew near; “ My good friend,” said she, in a whisper, “ one would suppose you had met with a disagreeable occurrence this morning; let your senses be enlightened, and you have every thing to expect, that the most extravagant fancy can form.”—“ She passed out of the closet; and he very soon took leave of the King, walking towards the gallery, where he wished to be alone, and recover from his surprise and vexation.

“ He had not walked five minutes, before a door opening, which led to a private staircase,

case, the Baroneſs De Foulanges entered, and inſtantly joined him. She rallied him at firſt on the diſcompoſure too viſible in his features ; aſſured him he was in love ; bid him not deſpair ; it was impoſſible his miſtreſs could be cruel ; at leaſt, added ſhe, if ſhe entertains the ſame ſentiments for you that I do, believe me you have nothing to fear, however exalted her rank and ſtation : another day, my poor Count, you ſhall make me your confidante ; at this unlucky moment I am called elſewhere.

“ She quickly paſſed through the gallery, and left him almoſt petrified. He ſaw now the danger of his ſituation : he both deſpiſed and feared thoſe women ; if he truſted to the evidence of his ſenſes, the Baroneſs was fond of him herſelf ; yet ſometimes he thought it poſſible ſhe might be employed as an emiſſary by Louiſa : either way he had every thing to dread from the violence of their paſſions, which were pretty generally known.

He

“ He returned to his Adelaide, devoured by chagrin, yet very desirous of keeping his vexation a secret from her. The following day the King again demanded why the Countess did not appear, and he found it impossible longer to delay that duty, so naturally expected.

“ The Countess of Angoulême loaded him with her attentions: the Baroness De Foulanges was more guarded in her expressions; but her eyes said a great deal. The Admiral Bonivet, hitherto the favourite of Louisa, treated him with a cool, studied politeness, for he saw evidently which way her inclinations pointed.

“ At length my mother was introduced at Court, and immediately superceded the Countess of Chatau Briant in the affections of the King. His admiration of her was visible to the whole circle; and from that hour every art that he could secretly employ, was planned to destroy her honour and happiness. She
was

was overwhelmed with civilities by Francis and his mother: she rivalled all former favorites: was the oracle consulted upon all occasions, and no entertainment or party could be formed, without the Countess De Beauvais presided at them.

“ Young, beautiful, innocent and unsuspecting, she saw not the baseness and perfidy of the arts, by which they sought to undermine her honour and happiness. Her husband, indeed, began to tremble, and thought it highly requisite, both for his peace and her's, to develope the character of Louisa, and to caution her against the too pleasing attentions of the King, whose thousand amiable qualities were tarnished by the unbounded influence of his mother, and his too susceptible heart; the latter she encouraged, that she might acquire the more power when he was lulled into indolence by the fascination of beauty.

“ My father saw the dangers that threatened them, and would gladly have withdrawn from court; but he could form no pretence for such a step, and therefore was obliged, though with reluctance, to open the eyes of my mother. She heard him with surprise and emotion: the Countess of Angoulême had, by her kindness and apparent candour, acquired much of her esteem:—the Baroness de Foulanges she thought a most amiable woman; and the dazzling qualities of Francis commanded her respect and admiration. Pained therefore to the heart, she rather wished to think her husband too quick sighted, too easily alarmed, and too ready to give way to injurious reports, than to believe persons she so highly honoured, could be capable of such baseness, or wear a mask of duplicity, to betray an innocent unoffending woman.

“ It was the first time in her life she had set up her own judgment against her dear Count's. He was not surprised, though hurt,
at

at her prejudice in favour of those whose integrity he doubted. All plausible appearances, every thing that could captivate the eye, and fascinate the senses, were on their side: and a heart void of guile like my mother's, was slow to believe there could exist such depravity, in persons so gifted by nature and fortune.

“ She however assured my father, she would profit by his confidence, and gradually lessen the great intimacy between the Countess Louisa, the Baroness and herself. But this was a vain attempt; new pleasures and entertainments crowded upon them daily; and at this period it was, that by the persuasions of the Countess, and the concurrence of my father (who saw with inexpressible grief, that my mother had no time now to dedicate to my improvements) I was placed in a Convent for education.

“ Mean time the Countess of Chateau Briant saw her influence losing ground, and
L 2 that

that she had a formidable rival. Deeply versed in the arts of court intrigue, she affected to treat my mother with the utmost politeness; humoured the King in his new attachment, and by such management, secured to herself his respect and attention: but she conceived the most violent hatred against Louisa, and secretly determined to be revenged.

“ My father kept an attentive eye on all their proceedings; he was convinced that his wife was virtuous; but he saw it was the endeavour of the King’s mother, and her favourite, to have her believed otherwise; to insinuate that she was the mistress of the King.

“ This he could not bear, and therefore, though pained to the heart to give one moment’s pain to the woman he loved, he once more spoke, and with some warmth warned her from the dangerous precipice to which she

she was advancing, where her honour and happiness would be wrecked for ever.

"She saw not her danger with the same eyes that he did; but deeply affected by his emotions, she embraced him with fervor; assured him of her love and fidelity, and protested she would withdraw herself from court, rather than make him unhappy. Delighted with her kindness, he determined to make one great effort, and if the pretence must be a deceptive one, to plead ill health as an excuse for retiring into the country. Such were his intentions, when his evil genius counteracted all his plans.

"During the whole time that Francis and his court daily sought out new amusements to please my mother, my father was exposed to the private attacks of Louisa and the Baroness: each sought to rival the other, and obtain his affection. Hitherto he had been cold and repulsive to all their attentions: fond of his Adelaide to distraction; a man of

L 3

honour,

honour, who despised such licentious women, his whole soul was engrossed by his anxiety for his wife, and firm resolution to avoid any scandalous intrigues with women, who, however exalted in rank, were contemptuous in his eyes by their depravity of manners.

“ The very day on which my father and mother held their last conversation, there was to be a grand gala at court in the evening:—neither could be excused from going; but both determined it should be the last entertainment they would share in: my father from conviction of their danger; my mother from motives of affection for him, and a sense of her duty to comply with his wishes, rather than from dislike or apprehension.

“ The Countess of Angoulesme came for my mother: my father was preparing to follow soon after, when a note was delivered to him, requesting he would follow the messenger immediately, without asking a single question, on an affair that concerned his honour

honour and happiness, but which would not detain him an hour.

“Extremely alarmed, without taking time for consideration, he followed the man to the out-skirts of the city, where he stopped at the door of a handsome looking house: it was nearly dark, and certainly he had outstept the bounds of prudence, in going unaccompanied with a stranger beyond the streets; but his extreme agitation precluded thought or fear, and he entered the house with all the impatience of a man whose existence seemed to hang on the intelligence of the next moment.

“He was conducted up stairs through a gallery; the door of an apartment was opened, and his conductor took leave with a low bow; not a word had passed between them. He entered a handsome well furnished room; lights were on the table, and two chairs placed near it. He threw himself into one of them; his emotions so great, and his ideas so confused,

fused, that he scarcely retained his senses. Near ten minutes had elapsed, an age in his estimation; his inquietude was raised to its utmost stretch, when the opening of a door made him start from his chair and spring forward. He met the Baroness de Foulanges."

"How madam!" he exclaimed, "is it you? What means this mystery, and why do I meet you here?"

"Be seated, my dear Count," said she, with an air of tenderness, and you shall soon be satisfied."

"Without further preface, she entered on a story, fabricated for the purpose of convincing my father, that the Countess De Beauvais had long since sacrificed her virtue and his honour to the King; and that the Countess of Angoulême was privy to the intrigue, giving up every sense of delicacy and decorum to the gratification of her son."

"Impossible!"

"Impossible!" my father cried, with indignation, "'tis a vile, a gross calumny; my Adelaide is as pure as new-fallen snow; she has consented to leave the court, to retire with me into the country, and this very night intends to take leave of the Countess, at the same time that I shall ask his Majesty's permission for leave of absence to recover my health.—No, madam, neither her honour nor mine have been sacrificed; I despise the insinuation with my whole heart."

"He rose with warmth, as if to leave the room; the artful woman burst into a flood of tears, threw herself on her knees, and laid hold of his coat. The Baroness was then in the bloom of beauty; elegant in her figure; captivating in her manners; her fine large black eyes were almost irresistible: she had been early initiated into the arts of pleasing, and been an adept in the voluptuous school of her mistress Louisa. Now at the age of eight and twenty, she was well skilled in every artifice to delude and betray."

“ This fascinating woman, by her tears and prayers, arrested the steps of my father :— Dangerous moment !

“ Fury raised to the utmost pitch, was suddenly checked, by looking down on a beautiful woman in tears at his feet. Humanity bade him raise her from such an unbecoming posture ; she pressed the assisting hand to her bosom, and besought him to hear the history of her heart. Half reluctant, he resumed his seat : she still retained his hand, and entered into a detail of her constant and unconquerable love for him ; a love she had exerted every power to subdue, and should have condemned to eternal silence, rather than have forfeited her modesty and delicacy, had she not been perfectly convinced of his wife's falsehood.

“ Again my father was enraged, and endeavoured to break from her ; but she had gone too far to recede, and saw the conflicts in his mind : in short, she detained him by
her

her tears and caresses, nor did they part 'till she had engaged a repetition of his visits; a promise to delay his journey into the country; and infused more than a suspicion, almost a certainty, into his mind, of his wife's guilt.

“ She also cautioned him against Louisa, whom she represented as quite abandoned in her amours, and vindictive in her temper.

“ Ah! what a mere automaton is man in the hands of a lovely, artful and wicked woman! how powerful are the fascination of the senses to hoodwink reason, and for a time, while the delusion lasts, to trample on discretion and judgment!

“ Such were my father's reflections in a cooler hour; but the tumults of his mind, when he left that dangerous woman, admitted not of reason or reflection.

L 6

“ He

“ He was obliged to appear at court ; it was an unusual late hour. When he entered the room, the first objects that met his eyes, were the King and his Countess sitting together and in earnest conversation ; others, not engaged in dancing, standing at a respectful distance. He started at the sight, and for the first time felt anger and contempt for his innocent wife, when it should have been directed against himself.

“ The Countess of Angoulesme, who had kept her eyes directed towards the door, impatient, and wondering at his absence, no sooner saw him, than she beckoned for him to approach her. He coldly paid his duty to his Majesty ; threw a reproachful glance at his wife (who had been extremely uneasy for the last two hours) and drew near to Louisa, who exerted all her powers of blandishment to allure and please him.

“ But his mind was agitated by a confusion of painful images ; and his behaviour was

was so strange; his conversation so disjointed, and often times so incoherent, that in the utmost surprise she remarked,"

"You are out of your senses, surely, my dear Count.—For heaven's sake what ails you?"

"I believe I am half mad," answered he; "pardon me, madam, for my seeming inattention; I am really not well."

"Her feelings were alarmed in a moment; she dragged him into another room, scarcely perceptible to himself; and ordering drops, cordials, and various other things, obliged him to take whatever she thought requisite; and which, in fact, did a little calm the perturbation of his spirits, and restore him to reason.

"Her solicitude he received with respect and gratitude; said he was much recovered, and motioned to return into the ball-room. The Countess chose to make the most of this opportunity;

opportunity; his plea of illness gave a colour for her attention and kindness; and her expressions of tenderness were too unequivocal not to be understood.

“Recollection of the scene he had lately been engaged in, darted upon his memory; he started from his seat, without making any reply; he took her hand, and led her as abruptly and as unwilling into the next apartment, as she had hurried him out of it.

“On their entrance, the Countess, his wife, seemed to make an apology to the King, and hastily advanced to her husband.”

“My dear Count,” said she, “I have suffered the utmost inquietude this evening from your absence. You look discomposed: are you well? Has any thing happened to make you uneasy? Our little Adelaide —”

“Is perfectly well, I believe,” he replied; “I have been engaged this evening, unexpectedly,

perfectly, but nothing to occasion you any concern."

"His feelings at that instant were indefinable. What he had heard to the prejudice of the Countess, with the particular attentions he had himself observed, and the conclusions he drew from late occurrences, that there were moments in which design and artifice might triumph over our best resolves, altogether rested on his mind; gave rise to doubts and suspicion, and tended to lessen his confidence in that object, on whose honour and integrity he had hitherto reposed unlimited trust.—In fine, his own weakness had taught him to mistrust others.

"Endeavouring to rally his spirits, without any further conversation, he took her hand, and joined the circle round the King and his mother. Among other things that occurred, one gentleman lamented the absence of the Baroness de Foulanges."

"Ah!

"Ah! poor thing," said the Countess of Angoulesme, "she has been so miserably tormented with the tooth-ach and swelled face, that I left her this morning muffled up, and sufficiently mortified that she could not partake of our entertainment."

"My father instantly conceived the arrangement of the whole plan, of which he had been the dupe, and from that hour he felt the utmost contempt and aversion for the Baroness, and the highest indignation against himself.

"The varied amusements of the evening insensibly diverted his chagrin for some hours. He found it an improper time to address his Majesty as he intended, for leave to retire into the country; but determined to delay it no longer than the following day: his aversion to the Baroness, and his apprehension from the intriguing and violent disposition of Louisa, being additional spurs for the completion of his wishes.

"At

“ At night, when returned to his Adelaide, he sought to conceal the tumults of his mind, and appear unembarrassed and affectionate. The deception passed with her, for her innocent bosom harboured no suspicions. She told him not any opportunity had offered, that she could, with propriety, avail herself of, to speak her intentions of leaving the city, to the Countess of Angoulesme that evening; but that she would attend her toilet in the morning.

“ The following day my mother repaired to Louisa; my father, at the same hour, waited on his Majesty. Their applications were received with surprise and displeasure; and when my father urged the point from indisposition, the King told him, with a sarcastic smile, “ that if indeed his health required retirement, of which he saw no marks, at least it was by no means necessary that the court should be deprived of such an ornament as the Countess, and therefore he took
upon

upon him to command her residence in Paris."

"Stunned, and deeply hurt by language so unusual and peremptory, my father could only bow, and retired excessively chagrined. He was soon joined by the Countess, who related the ill-success of her embassy, though with less cause to be affected by it; for the Countess of Angoulême had loaded her with caresses; entreated her not to leave them; protested the most ardent friendship for her, and declared that a separation would make her extremely unhappy; nor should she ever forgive my father, if he persisted in the design of disuniting them.

"My mother, touched and flattered by such marks of affection, appeared very ready to relinquish her wishes; and her husband saw, with equal grief and indignation, that he must give up the point. Most reluctantly, therefore, he acquiesced in what he dared not refuse.

refuse, and all thoughts of their journey were, for the present, suspended.

“ That evening he received a note from the Baroness, requesting to see him the following night, at the house where they had happily met before. He tore the billet in a hundred pieces, and bade the messenger return and say it required no answer. Bitterly regretting his weakness on the preceding day, he determined no entreaties or artifice should draw him a second time into the same snare. Alas! he was not aware of the consequences, nor to what lengths malice, disappointed passion and revenge, would carry an abandoned woman.

“ They all met at court next day. The Baroness, with the most unblushing effrontery, sought to engage my father in conversation; he studiously avoided her. She then addressed herself to my mother, who was receiving thanks from the Countess of Angoulesme, as if she had conferred the highest obligation

obligation on her, by complying with her wishes. Those two ladies were unbounded in their expressions of kindness. The King, gay, entertaining and polite, seemed to have no eyes or ears, but for the Countess de Beauvais:—yet except my mother, not one of the party but was embarrassed and uneasy, for each had views they dared not avow, and wore a mask of duplicity.

“ In the close of the evening my father received a similar billet to the one given to him several days before, when he was going to the King's closet, by the same messenger, who gave it into his hand, and disappeared before he had the recollection to refuse it.

“ The contents upbraided his want of curiosity; his deficiency in gallantry, and little discernment:—again protested the writer, however exalted, perhaps above his hopes, entertained the warmest sentiments in his favour, which he was at liberty to profit by; and that the lady, so desirous of his
devoirs,

devoirs, when next they met, would be distinguished by a large ruby in the center of her bosom.

“ He now saw plainly, that the Countess Louisa was no longer restrained by delicacy, or dignity, from giving a loose to her passions. He was no stranger to her character:—he knew the excesses she was capable of, and traced all the consequences of flighting such advances, and affronting a woman who set no bounds to her love or resentment. The Baroness, he was assured, would not fail to become his enemy, and aggravate the displeasure of her mistress, making her power subservient to her own revenge.

“ Distressed, and excessively uneasy, as those reflections made him, he felt too much contempt and disgust for both ladies, and too much real affection for his wife, to plunge voluntarily into error; at the same time that he could devise no feasible plan for escaping from their machinations. Not a syllable of
the

the dilemma he was plunged into, escaped from his lips to his Countess; he wished to spare her unnecessary pain, or any conjectures that might lead to unpleasant discoveries.

“ Their attendance at court was unavoidable. The following day the Countess of Angoulesme appeared with the ruby; and the Baronesse de Foulanges darted at him from her large black eyes, glances of equal love and fury.

“ The King invited them to a private party in the evening: they dared not refuse an invitation that almost amounted to a command. My mother, indeed, still looked upon the assiduities of the King, as the gallantries of a young and handsome Monarch; believing he was still attached in his heart to the Countess of Chateau Briant, with whom he observed decent civilities; nor did she appear hurt by his attentions to my mother; her indifference on the occasion, and politeness

ness to my father and herself, lulled her into a perfect security, that the King could have no evil designs against them ; and that it was only her dear Count's tender affection for her, that made him think otherwise.

“ The party at night was composed of only seven persons ; his Majesty ; the Countess his mother ; the Countess of Chateau Briant ; the Admiral Bonivat ; the Baroness de Foulanges ; and the Count and Countess of Beauvais. Every species of luxury and pleasure that could gratify the appetite, and fascinate the senses, were introduced into this small circle :—every one appeared to be happy and delighted, though certainly some of them could not feel at ease.

“ In those dangerous moments, when virtue lay supine, and the susceptible heart was alive to every impassioned feeling, the Countess of Angoulême rose from her seat ; complained of the too powerful warmth of the room, and asked the Count, my father, to lead

lead her into an anti-chamber. He eagerly accepted the invitation:—she was beautiful, though past the meridian of life; and his senses were no longer under the dominion of prudence.

“ He retired with her, without thinking of his Adelaide; till roused to the recollection by the fond advances of Louisa; if it was dangerous to affront her, it was more repugnant to his heart, to render her that homage she expected. A retrospection on his past weakness, instantly recalled honour and discretion before they had retreated too far;—he resumed that air of respectful deference due to her high rank, and affected to believe her offered caresses, were only the consequence of the fatigue and lassitude she had complained of.

“ How the business would have ended, is uncertain, for an artful lovely woman, accustomed to be obeyed, flattered, and adored, might have been a dangerous opponent; but,

in the critical moment, when love and indignation inflamed every feature, and spoke unutterable things, the door opened, and the Baroness De Foulanges appeared.

“ She stopped short, with a look of malice, and affected surprise. Louisa haughtily demanded what she wanted.

“ My duty, madam, brought me here, to attend you, if you are indisposed, as I was led to believe; but,” added she, with a smile that betrayed the malignity of her heart, “ I see my presence is equally unnecessary as unwelcome; the Count de Beauvais is doubtless better formed for an assistant than myself.—I am no stranger to *his* accomplishments.”

“ Quite off her guard, as she uttered the last words; they were spoken with passion, and her eyes flashed fire, as she quitted the room rather unceremoniously.

“ Louisa was equally enraged and disconcerted, and before she could recover herself, my mother entered the room, much agitated;—without observing his companion, she flew to her husband;—“ My dear Count, let us return home immediately; I am not well; hasten, hasten to take me away.”

“ Her appearance and address at once restored my father to his senses; regardless of Louisa, he seized her offered hand, and, without speaking one word, led her out of the room. He was so confused, so hurried, and indeed his head so disordered, that he was scarce conscious of his own actions; and had forgot that appearance of respect, which the rank of the Countess of Angoulesme, had an undoubted claim to.

“ On quitting the apartment, at the end of the gallery they saw the Admiral, and the Countess of Chateau Briant, in close conversation; they advanced, and met them. The Admiral exclaimed, “ How, my friends,

are your tête-à-tête's so soon at an end? Our party is broke up mighty abruptly, I think."

"He passed on with a cool bow, without waiting for a reply.

"The Countess affected to whisper my father.

"You are tottering on a precipice, Count; the least step forward, and you are undone. You have nothing left, but to retire."

"She quickly glided by, leaving them confused and overwhelmed by a variety of painful emotions; their eyes met, but not a word passed, until they were seated in their coach.

"My father was the first that broke the silence.

M 2

"Tell

“ Tell me, my dear Adelaide, from what cause proceeds your extreme agitation?”

“ That *I* am to blame,” answered she, tenderly kissing his hand; “ in presuming to depend upon my own judgment, in preference to yours; that I have been deservedly insulted, because I chose wilfully to be blind, rather than give up pleasurable amusements, and the gratification of my vanity; yes, dear Count, I acknowledge my weakness; I was unwilling to retire from court, and *submitted* to your *right* of *dictating*, rather than *complied* with your *wishes*, when you determined to withdraw from it. I am punished for my errors; the veil is drawn aside, I can no longer affect blindness.”

“ What then,” said my father, impatiently, the King has dared to insult you; by Heavens! not even his rank shall protect him.”

“ Stop, said my mother, with a fixed and piercing eye; “ stop, Count, and before you give way to passion, ask, yourself, if a King has not equal rights with his subjects; and when the marriage vow is violated, by

one party, whether the other is not liable to similar temptations: it matters not, who, or what the object is, vice is vice, and whether 'tis Man or woman, crimes are equally odious in the sight of God.

“ My father was struck, as if by a sudden dart of lightning.

“ What is it you mean, madam?” asked he, hastily.”

“ If you do not comprehend me, my dear Count, I can have no *particular* meaning; but in one word, let me tell you, that I blame no one but myself: that the person who offended me, is sensible of his error; and that it is requisite we should lose no time in preparing for our departure; to withdraw from a licentious court, and enjoy happiness in our own domestic circle, will be a sufficient revenge upon those who have sought to disturb our peace.”

M 3

“ My

My father, conscious of his late error, had no doubt but the Countess was well informed of the circumstance; yet, as she had permitted him not to understand her allusion, he was content, for the present, to profit by her indulgence, therefore he replied only to her last words.

“ Yes, my dear Adelaide, we will hasten to quit scenes of tumult and dissipation; return to the peaceful retreat, we so reluctantly quitted, and satiated with the great world, doubly relish our innocent amusements.”

They arrived home tolerably tranquilized: my mother assured her dear Count, that the insults she complained against, had been confined to offers only, which her firm and spirited rejection of, seemed to grieve, more than offend; and that she hastily fled from a situation, she thought critical, and too alluring for the frailty of human nature, not fortified, like hers, by the duty and affection she felt for a husband.”

“ The

“ The following morning they had formed their plan for leaving the court; my father received an order to attend the King; it was with some difficulty my mother could prevail upon him to obey the mandate, and to engage for his silence on recent circumstances, which, she said, it was by no means necessary he should appear to have any knowledge of. This sort of finesse, did not please him, but at length he reluctantly yielded to her wishes.”

“ On his way to the King’s closet, he was met by Louisa; “ follow me,” said she, haughtily, leading the way to another apartment; he said something about his duty to attend his royal master; “ Obey *me*,” returned she, with a look of fury, he could not withstand, and entered the room; he followed.

“ Count,” said she, “ hear me with attention, and know I speak the determined purpose of my heart. My son is fond of your wife; she is envied by all the court ladies; you are equally disliked by the men; married

ones murmur at the success of *your* wife, in preference to *theirs*; young men hate you, for the favour you enjoy in the good graces of those, who are so greatly your superior.

“ You have it now in your choice to arrive at enviable power and riches; let your wife keep the consequence she has gained; do you profit by the distinction you are honoured with; in short, remain as ornaments to our court, and there are no distinctions or honours you may not command.—If on the contrary, you presume to slight the *wishes* of those who have a right to *command*, be assured your destruction is at hand: we will not be offended with impunity; decide at once; if wisely and agreeable to your friends, I will lead you to the King; if otherwise, through a ridiculous delicacy, remember you draw down certain vengeance on your head, and more than one life may be the sacrifice.”

This threat, which he thought her very capable of fulfilling, greatly shocked my father; but he did not hesitate.”

“ My

“ My duty to the King, madam, brought me to pay my homage to him, for the last time: after which, my respects would have carried me to you: I have only *now* to take my leave of his majesty.”

“ He bowed low, and quitted the room.

“ How she bore this, he knew not: he attended the King, who told him, he had appointed him his chamberlain. My father was confounded for a moment, but recovering, lamented his misfortune in being compelled to decline so great an honour, but, that certain affairs of infinite consequence, called him into the country immediately, and he came then to take his leave.

“ The King looked surprised and disconcerted; but after a short pause,—

“ Go then, Count, since it must be so; I may *respect*, but I cannot *love* you; go, and *return no more!*”

M 5

“ This

“ This was, in fact, a sentence of banishment; as such my father felt it, and quitted the presence not a little chagrined; for, though he wished to leave the court, he did not like to have his return proscribed.

On entering his wife's apartment, to his infinite astonishment, he found with her, the Baroness De Foulanges;—few visits had passed between the ladies, though they constantly met in the same circle; nor had she ever been at his house, since a certain affair, remembered by him with vexation and remorse. His looks denoted his surprise; and he observed mingled spite and restrained fury in hers.”

“ Well, Count,” said she, “ may I congratulate you on your honours?”

“ Not of the kind *intended to be conferred on me by my friends*,” he replied; “ I have had the honour to take leave of his majesty, and the Countess of Angoulême, and I thank
you,

you, madam, for sparing me a visit of the same import to yourself."

"You are then obstinate and determined," said she; "and you *did* intend paying me a visit? What then should prevent it? I came to see the Countess, to persuade her not to act like a child, or ridiculously run into the country; but she either has not good-breeding enough to understand the value of friendly counsel, or wit enough to be advantaged by it; and therefore I am sorry to have bestowed time and words so unprofitably."

"So am I, madam," returned my mother, with spirit; "for I know well how to appreciate the *intention* of this visit, and respect it accordingly. We shall in all probability meet no more, and therefore I have only to wish *you* may be as happy with the Baron De Foulanges, as I shall be with my dear Count."

"The Baron was many years older than the Countess,—a weak man, seldom seen, and hardly ever talked of; her aversion for

him, was well known; he was mean enough to profit by the intrigues of his wife, and the power she had acquired by her blind compliance with the unbounded passions of the Countess Louisa. An object of general contempt at court; he was despised and hated by his wife. My mother's wish, therefore, she felt as a sarcasm, and no doubt it helped to point her vengeance on a woman she considered as doubly her rival in virtue and in love.

"She condescended not to reply; but turning to my father,"—

"I dispute not with your intended leave-taking visit, sir, I shall return home immediately, and expect to see you within this hour."

"He bowed, but spoke not; and she left the house without deigning to look at my mother."

"Fear

"Fear not this insolent woman, my dear Adelaide," said my father, observing an air of trouble seated over her features; "we shall soon be removed from her resentment or power; before this hour to-morrow, I hope you will *be secure from the disturbers of your peace.*"

"Prophetic words! how soon to be realized!"

"The day was passed in hasty preparations for their departure, regardless of the threatening vengeance that hung over them. It was determined that I should be taken from the convent, and accompany them into the country. A messenger was ordered to attend my mother's woman early the following morning, to bring me from thence, and at noon they proposed setting off for the first stage.

"That morning came; my mother drank her chocolate in bed as usual, though at an early hour, to be ready for her journey; soon after,

after, when getting up, she complained of sickness, which increased to an alarming degree, (unhappily my father had gone out just as her chocolate was taken to her) though she could not account for this sickness, she did not conceive it dangerous; and when her chamber-maid, who attended her in the absence of her woman, proposed sending for a physician, she checked the girl's zeal, and forbid any one being sent for. The complaint, however, grew worse, and she was seized with convulsions.

“ The terrified servants ran out to seek for their master; he was found by one of them, and told my mother was ill. He flew home, and arrived at the door almost at the same instant that I alighted with the persons sent for me; too much agitated to regard me in that moment, he hastened to my mother's apartment,—what a sight for an adoring husband!

“ He

“ He found her distorted by the most dreadful convulsions, and apparently dying.

“ Physicians were sent for, and every medical aid given, that could be administered. My father appeared in a state of distraction; he asked repeatedly what was her disorder? from what cause it proceeded? The medical men shrugged their shoulders, looked mysterious, but evaded giving any other answer than that “ Madame, the Countess, was past all hopes of recovery.”

“ In less than three hours, their predictions were verified; I saw that dear mother expire without being sensible that a husband and child, so tenderly beloved, were in her apartment, kneeling at the side of her bed. My father attempted to rise, but, with a heavy groan, fell senseless on the floor.

“ I but faintly recollected the subsequent circumstances that occurred for three days; that my dear surviving parent lay at the point
of

of death; the fourth day his disorder took a favourable turn; the fifth, it was thought necessary to consult with him on the funeral, which was ordered for the country; but as the body was to be embalmed, he insisted upon its not being removed, till he was capable of attending it.

“ Mean-time, from the day of my angelic mother’s death, the physician and attendants whispered their suspicions of poison, and the corpse gave very justifiable cause for these suspicions. The moment my father was restored to sense, he requested to know of the physician in what manner he accounted for a disorder so sudden and so fatal. It was with much reluctance the gentleman declared his opinion.

“ What a husband must feel, may be more easily conceived than described. Every servant was ordered to the apartment, and who made her chocolate, was the first question asked. The chamber maid who had attended, was

was then first missed; on being called for, she was not to be found: nor had been seen since the preceding evening; this absence threw the suspicion on her, and orders were given to make a strict search for her throughout the city.

“The agonies my poor father felt, are inexpressible. I was sitting by the side of his bed, weeping, and unable to speak comfort, when his valet burst abruptly into the room, pale and trembling;—“My lord! my dear master!” he could say no more; a file of soldiers followed him, who approached the bed, produced a paper, and ordered my father to get up, as they must convey him to prison, on a charge of having *poisoned his lady*, then dead in the house.

“He neither fainted, nor spoke at this dreadful summons;—his eyes were fixed in wild astonishment; my screams, when one of the men rudely advanced to take his arm, brought

brought him to a return of his senses, before stagnated."

"Patience, my dear child," said he, the measure of my woes is full; my enemies can inflict no more; I have deserved it all. Comfort yourself, my dear Adelaide, I must obey the order. His composure was astonishing; weak and feeble, he could do nothing for himself, they permitted not his faithful servant to assist him, but huddled on his clothes, and between two of them, carried him down stairs; when at the bottom, I followed, wild with grief."

"Stop, my friends," said he; "tell me what is to become of my child?"

"Oh, take me also!" I exclaimed.

"Will you permit her to follow me?" he asked.

The mild resignation of his manner, the heavy illness that oppressed him, seemed to affect

affect those instruments of others vengeance ;
—they looked at each other.

“ We have no orders respecting Miss,”
said one.

“ The poor child can do no harm,”
returned another ; “ the Count is so ill, he
requires some person with him ; let us take
her ; if she is not permitted to enter, the fault
is not ours.”

“ I was placed in the coach with my
unhappy father ; a person of some authority
was left in the house with the servants : we
drove from the door ; he clasped my hands.”

“ My dear Adelaide, my wife remains a
corpse, unburied, and without a friend ! Great
God, support me ! my child ! my child !
what will become of thee ?”

“ Unable to sustain the conflicting pas-
sions that overwhelmed him, he fainted, and
had

had scarce given signs of returning life, when we arrived at the prison.

“ He was carried in, and I was permitted to follow, until the King’s pleasure was known.

“ Five days we remained in dreadful suspense. The apothecary who attended the prisoners, treated my unhappy father with skill and humanity; he continued extremely ill, but patient as an angel: No questions were permitted; no conversation, but on the state of his health, allowed of; we were therefore strangers to the charges against him; or who were his accusers.

“ On the six day of our confinement, I was sent for to another apartment, a gentleman waited to see me; terrified and trembling, I clung to my father.”

“ Go, my child,” said he, faintly, “ the barbarians who have destroyed the parents, will at least respect your youth and innocence.

Alas!

“ Alas! my Adelaide, I cannot protect thee; go willingly, or you may provoke force and ill treatment: to Providence I trust my child,” said he, raising his eyes to heaven.

“ I permitted the man to lead me into the next room; I saw a face that was familiar to me, though I could not recollect where, or when I had seen it.”

“ Poor little thing!” cried he, with an air of more contempt than compassion, “ I come, Adelaide, from your grand Aunt, the Countess de Noailles, to conduct you to her, until she has determined in what Convent to place you for life.”

“ For life!” I exclaimed, interrupting him, “ I will not live in a Convent for life, nor do I want to go to my Aunt; I shall remain with my dear father.”

“ Do you know, miss,” returned he, “ that the process has gone against your father; that though no absolute proof appears,

pears, every thing speaks so strongly against him, that he would have been put to death, had not the King, from the regard he once had for him, and the remembrance, that his exertions contributed to save his royal master in the hour of danger, weighed with his Majesty to change his sentence into perpetual imprisonment. But his estates are confiscated, his name infamous, and his whole family disgraced by his atrocity in murdering your mother. The King has graciously permitted the Countess de Noailles to bury the unhappy victim to his revenge and base suspicions, in the family vault, and to give up you to her care. But as you can never appear in the world, it is recommended to her, to dispose of you in a Convent, where the infamy entailed on your name, may be sunk in the professional one that will be chosen for you. Do you comprehend all this, child? if not, take this paper to your father, and then hasten to me; my time is very short."

" Young

“ Young as I was, not one word of this long and cruel speech was lost upon me ; it sunk deep into my mind, and a thousand times have I recalled every syllable, that spoke daggers to my heart.

“ I took the paper in silence ; returned to my father, and gave it into his hand. He saw my extreme agitation, and trembled as he unfolded this dreadful mandate. He read his own condemnation and sentence with composure ; but when he found his little fortune lost, his name infamous, and his child to be shut up in a monastery for ever, then he could no longer suppress his sighs and groans ; he snatched me to his beating heart, and uttered the most piercing lamentations.

“ A Physician who had been called in, and had visited him two or three times, came in at this critical moment ; to him my father appealed ; called upon heaven to attest his innocence of the crime for which he was condemned, unheard and unexamined ; declared

clared he wished not for life ; a sudden execution would have been mercy ; but now to have infamy attached to his child ; to have her shut out from the world as an unworthy member of society, was too much for human nature to bear.

“ In short, the agonies he was in, called forth the humanity of this worthy man. He desired to see the keeper of the prison.

“ Have you received any orders, sir, respecting the Count and his daughter ? ” demanded he.

“ No, sir, nothing more than to admit a gentleman who is in the next room, and who is to take miss from hence, if her father chuses it.”

“ Then I do not chuse it,” exclaimed my father, briskly : “ If I am condemned to perpetual imprisonment : if my child is to be separated from me, I will have better authority for delivering her up than this paper,

paper, which no friend could dictate. Surely, if my fortune is confiscated, his Majesty will allow something for the support of my child, in a Convent of her own choice."

"The gentleman I had been attending, now entered the room, and my father instantly knew him for a young Abbé, who had long been the confidential favourite of my grand Aunt, whose views upon her fortune he had always suspected, and who, he had no doubt, found it for his interest to make a Nun of me. A long conversation took place; he either did, or affected to believe, my father guilty:—said he had been in town three days, in consequence of an express sent from court to the Countess:—that every servant had been examined, and every apparent proof adduced; all which served to criminate my father beyond a doubt, though his Majesty spared his life from generous motives.

"That the Countess, in taking care of my soul as well as my body, had given the

only mark of affection for her late niece, that became her character; where her family and name had suffered irreparable disgrace, in being allied to a man capable of such enormities, as had deprived her of a near relation, and drawn on himself a condemnation of death.

“ The good physician heard him with silent indignation; then turning to my father, “ *permission* to take your child, ‘does *not* imply an absolute *command* for you to deliver her up. Compose yourself for a short time fir; I will go to court, and know more of this matter; you shall soon see me again.”

“ He left us directly; the Abbé not feeling himself quite at ease, rose also.

“ I shall return in time to receive my charge, and would recommend to you, as one step towards the repentance your crimes call for, to behave with submission to higher powers,

powers, and joyfully devote your child to the service of God."

"He left the room with an air of scorn and triumph.

"The tender scene that passed between my father and self, I will not repeat, for I have already been too tedious.

"The Physician returned sooner than we expected. He was, it appeared, a great favourite with the Countess of Chateau Briant: to her he had been, and related every circumstance he had observed and witnessed respecting my father, whom he was inclined to think very favourably of, and besought her consideration of me.

"She told him the Count de Beauvais had been condemned the preceding day; that he would doubtless be shut up in close confinement for life, the moment he could leave his bed; his Majesty having still some little

N 2 remains

remains of regard for him, and therefore would have him restored to convalescence, before he was removed to a remote fortress for the rest of his days.

“ She believed he had powerful enemies in the Countess of Angoulême and the Baroness de Foulanges; for her own part, she never much liked the late Countess, any more than she did her enemies: whether the Count was innocent or guilty, was not for her to determine; but she pitied the poor child, and if the Count preferred the Convent she had been placed in by her mother, she could easily obtain an order for her return to it, and would take upon herself to pay the pension, and pledge her word that the poor child should not be obliged hereafter to take the veil against her inclinations.

“ In fine, she went immediately to the King; her influence over him was not lost, only suspended by his passion for my mother, and the intrigues of Louisa. He was deeply affected

affected at the melancholy catastrophe which had happened, and enraged against my father; but he had no quarrel with me, and therefore made the Countess the compliment of being the mistress of my destiny, to give me up to the Countess de Noailles, or not as she judged right.

“ This point obtained, the Physician returned, with leave for me to remain with my father, till he was pronounced capable of being removed.

“ Our joy was excessive when this intelligence was brought, and the disappointment of the Abbé proportionate; however, he comforted himself with the reflection, that the refusal of the Count would entirely alienate his patroness from us, and that no resource but the veil could be found for me. All this was evidently implied, though not in direct words, by what he said when taking leave; bidding us adieu for ever, and advising me to change my name.

“ This disagreeable business produced happy effects ; it procured my father a friend in his physician : the good man seemed to have no doubt of his innocence ; but the power of his accusers, whom he named as the Countess of Angoulesme, and the Baroness her confidante, afforded no possibility of hope that he could escape from their malice the moment he was able to leave his bed : all he could do was to make unfavourable reports of his health, and in them he did not violate truth.

“ One morning that he came to us, when he observed we were both more wretched than usual, having been talking of my angel mother, he asked my father's permission for me to wait on the Countess of Chateau Briant, privately, in his carriage. He hesitated at this request : he knew the character of the lady, the acknowledged mistress of the King : her passions violent ; her influence rivalled only by the power of Louisa, whom she hated.

“ Very

“ Very generally disliked by the court, from the rapid promotion of her own family, with few friends and many enemies, she had maintained her ground by artifice, and a seeming blindness to the intrigues and passions of Francis; though in truth many women had felt her vengeance for their presumption. Still she had managed with such an appearance of submission, that her power was boundless when scarce perceptible.

“ My father had never paid much court to this lady; no acquaintance had subsisted between them; and he had many times observed her dislike to my mother after the King paid her attentions.

“ He was therefore pained when his friend made the request: the Physician observed it. “ Be assured,” said he, “ I have good reasons for asking this favour; you will not regret obliging me; I will be answerable for her safety, and one visit is all I shall solicit for.”

for." No further objection could be made, and I prepared to attend him.

" I was introduced to the Countess; she was a very beautiful, though rather a masculine woman. She received me with an air of tenderness; I was struck dumb with surprise at the magnificence that surrounded her, and the grandeur of her air. She desired me to tell her every particular I knew between my father and mother; of their intended journey; of my father's behaviour; the absence of the chamber maid; and, in short, all I knew, or could recollect, of what I had heard. I obeyed her most readily, though not without much emotion, that seemed greatly to affect her.

" When I had concluded, " My good friend," said she to the Physician, " I entirely coincide with your opinion; but they are dangerous to avow, because 'tis impossible to adduce proofs, and if we could, there are some people too high for the law to reach.—

However,

However, the artless tale of this poor child has its proper effect. I will take my measures effectually, but it must be deliberately, or all may be ruined."

"She said no more; I was entertained with fruit and sweetmeats; with a cargo of both to take back to my father; and as privately as I came, I was conveyed home to him, much charmed with the kindness I had met with.

"I repeated every word to him; our good friend added, "take comfort, my dear Count, I dare not say what I think and hope, lest I should say too much, and untoward and unlooked for accidents intervene to blight my hopes. Endeavour, however, to compose your spirits, that your health may be restored; the rest we must leave to Providence."

"To my great joy, the health of my father daily amended, though a deep melan-

choly settled on his spirits: the former, I am sure, he owed to the kindness of his Physician; the latter, no medicine nor endeavours could remove.

“ In less than a week after my visit to the Countess of Chateau Briant, an order arrived from court, for the removal of my father to the castle in the Isle of St. Marguerite, where state prisoners were generally confined for life. This terrible, though expected order, annihilated every hope that had sometimes floated on our minds: not that life was desirable in the eyes of my father but on my account. The disgraceful circumstances attached to his name, he well knew would render every friend or relation cold towards me, from the inhuman censure which fastens on a whole family for the crimes of an individual, whether innocent or guilty, if condemned by the law.

“ To leave me therefore, exposed to poverty and contempt, or to be forced into a Convent,

a Convent, and obliged to make vows my heart revolted against, those were the dreadful considerations that oppressed his mind, and pulled him back to earth, when his spirit would willingly have flown to join his Adelaide's.

“ This removal to the castle, was a thousand times worse than death; he had no resource for my safety, but in the promises of the Countess of Chateau Briant; and how little court ladies could be depended upon, he well knew.

“ Under the most agonising terrors, we were found by the Physician. “ Do not despond,” said he, “ much depends upon your resolution and prudence; I have cause to hope you will soon be in safety; but you must part immediately with your daughter; an order will arrive this evening for her being delivered to the Countess of Chateau Briant; confide in me, I will answer for her with my life. One thing I am commanded to exact from

from you," added he, pulling a book and crucifix from his bosom, "you must here take a solemn oath to change your name; never to reveal your real one, nor any of the circumstances of your life, that may lead to a discovery of your person, your birth, or situation; the name of your preserver, if fortunately you are preserved; nor, in fine, at any time, or in any manner, ever give cause to believe that such a person exists in the world as yourself, during the life of the Countess of Angoulesme, or the Countess of Chateau Briant.

"You must be content to fly far from hence, and to live in obscurity all your days, if you take your daughter; if, on the contrary, you will entrust her to the care of another, you may, in some distant kingdom, under a borrowed name, woo fortune to be more propitious.

"Enter into this solemn, this sacred engagement, and you shall be properly instructed"

"My

“ My father, without hesitation, pronounced the oath, and took heaven, and the holy Virgin to witness it:—young as I was, he obliged me to do the same.

“ Now, then,” said the Physician, “ I will no longer withhold my confidence in your honour, being perfectly convinced of your innocence. The Countess, your friend, has been indefatigable in your service; she has discovered that the chamber-maid who attended your lady, had been previously in the service of the Baroness de Foulanges; was with her when you visited her, though unseen by you. This creature was placed in your house as a spy, and instructed to gain the confidence and love of her lady.

“ Not a word or action passed in your house unknown to the Baroness; she was jealous of Louisa, yet endeavoured to inflame her with love for you, and both sought to engage your lady in a commerce with the King. All this was known to our friend,
who

who likewise had her spies:—such are the intrigues of courts!

“ The night of the private party, when Louisa drew you from table, the King gave his private signal for the rest of the company to depart without ceremony. What passed cannot be known, only that the King speaks in the highest terms of the virtue and discretion of your late Countess, whose short stay at that time, gave surprise to all.

“ My Countess, you may believe, was not displeased, though she affected to be unconcerned. Every thing that passed in your house was known, and it seems you affronted both the Countess of Angoulesme and the Barones. There is little doubt but your lady received the deadly draught from her chamber maid, who left the house a day or two after, when the rumour of poison gained ground. She has never been heard of since; whether she is alive or not, cannot be known, but there is no doubt of her being the instrument

ment of vengeance, through the machinations of the Baronefs, whose creature ſhe was.

“ Yet no proofs can be obtained ; Louiſa has too much power to be offended ; nor can the Countefs of Chateau Briant avow the means by which ſhe has gained this intelligence. You are condemned, your fortune loſt, your name proſcribed, your relations diſgraced ; nothing remains therefore, but to preſerve your life, and wait for better days ; a time may come, when you may triumph over the malice of your enemies ; but till the death of Louiſa, you are entirely loſt to the world.”

“ This long detail ſhocked my father extremely, though he had always believed his beloved wife was ſacrificed to the intemperate paſſions of the two ladies ; but their diabolical cruelty in charging him with their crimes ; of having him convicted unexamined, was ſuch atrocious wickedneſs, as none but the vileſt of their ſex could be guilty of.

The Physician told him to resign me with confidence to the person who came for me, depending that our separation would be short. The day after to-morrow, said he, you will set off on your journey; before that you will see me again. Trust in Providence, and fear nothing.

“ He left us abruptly; hope and fear alternately oppressed us. My dear father held me to his bosom, beseeching the holy Virgin’s protection of an unfortunate orphan, when the moment arrived for our separation. I was delivered up more dead than alive, to a man appointed to receive me. My father sunk on his knees as I quitted his sight. I appeared before the Countess in unspeakable agonies of grief. She embraced and soothed me. The person you lament, said she, you will see again; fear nothing.

“ I was shewn to an apartment; refreshments given to me, and very soon put to bed. The next morning the Countess came

to

to me ; she perceived I had passed a sleepless night, by my countenance.

“ Come, my dear child,” said she, “ we are going to a Convent ; you must be content to stay there for a week or ten days ; make yourself easy ; at the expiration of that time I will fetch you, and restore you to your best friend, who, depend upon it, will be in safety.”

“ My heart sunk ; I dreaded some treachery ; but I was in her power ; I could not help myself : a solemn oath had passed my lips, never to reveal myself or family. Dupont was the name agreed upon by my father and the Physician. As Miss Dupont, therefore, I was to be introduced to the Convent. The Countess had a relation of that name, whom she expected from the country. I was to remain, she said, 'till the young lady came. She should acquaint the King of my residence, and after I had quitted the
house,

house, should curiosity lead any one to enquire, a Miss Dupont would still be there, and consequently, all cause of suspicion concerning me would be done away, particularly as but few persons knew any thing of me; and my own relations were glad to forget such a being existed."

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.



MINERVA PUBLICATIONS.

PLAIN SENSE,

In 3 Vols. 12mo.

Price 9s. sewed.

Though we are not accustomed to recommend, with much warmth, the reading of Novels, yet our caution arises chiefly from the fear of their being too much, or too indiscriminately perused. A few select books of this kind may be read with advantage, provided that such reading be not made a daily or serious occupation. With this restriction we recommend very cordially such volumes as these we are considering. A story more interesting and affecting, or better told than this, has seldom come under our examination. Austere as critics are imagined to be, they are not insensible to the charms of such a heroine as Ellen Mordaunt. Perhaps the principal incident in her story, upon which all the rest turns, is not managed as we could wish; what is commonly called first love, that is the fancy of a boy and girl for each other, founded upon seeing, rather than knowing one another, is not indeed what we insist upon being adhered to. But a first attachment like Ellen's, founded upon solid merit, and long acquaintance, and sanctioned by parents on both sides, should not have been renounced so speedily. At least, if duty and honor forbade her union with Henry, there was no necessity.—But we will not diminish the painfully pleasing suspense in which this Novel must hold its readers; we shall only remark, that the title of it appears to us not happily chosen. The character of Ellen is actually distinguished not so much by *plain sense*, as by highly cultivated judgment, exquisite feeling, and invincible integrity. Parents may not only with safety put these Volumes into the hands of their children, but may even peruse them with advantage themselves.

BRITISH CRITIC.

JUST PUBLISHED.—SECOND EDITION,

THE
DEMOCRAT,

TWO VOLS. 12mo.

Price 9s. sewed.

We have seen lately but few productions, under this title, possessed of qualities to rescue them from that oblivion to which the majority of their species is daily hastening. The Democrat attributed to Mr. Pye, small as it is, belongs undoubtedly to the excepted few. Its scanty pages, and thin small volumes, contain more real humour, and just satire, than are found in wading through many sheets of the ordinary manufacture. It is a pity that the Writer abridged our amusement, by becoming so soon weary of his own.

BRITISH CRITIC.
